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IDYLS IN DRAB

By W. D. HOWELLS.

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IDYLS IN DRAB

BY

WILLIAM D. HOWELLS

Author's Edition

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THE DAY OF THEIR WEDDING

THE DAY OF THEIR WEDDING.

I.

WHEN the train slowed before drawing into the station at Fitchburg, Sister Althea took up her bag from the floor, and began to collect her paper parcels into her lap, as if she were going to leave the car. Then she sat gripping the bag to her side and staring out into the night, blotched everywhere with the city lights and the railway signals—red and green and orange. From time to time she looked round over her shoulder into the car, up and down the aisle, and again set her face towards the window, and held it so rigidly, to keep herself from turning any more, that it hurt her neck.

The car was a day-coach on a night train, and most of the few passengers were making preparations for leaving it. An old gentle-

man in the seat across the aisle, whom she had asked more than once whether the train was sure to stop at Fitchburg, was already buttoned up in a light overcoat, which he had the effect of wearing in compliance with charges against exposing himself to the night air. He sat humming to himself while he held fast an umbrella and a bundle such as one married sister might send to another by their father; it was in several sections of wrapping-paper, and was tied with tape. He leaned over towards Sister Althea, and asked, benevolently, "Was you expecting to meet friends in Fitchburg?"

Sister Althea started and looked round. He repeated the question, and she gasped out, "Nay; I am not expecting friends to meet me." She had framed her reply with a certain mechanical exactness which he seemed to feel.

"Oh! ah! From the Family at Vardley, I presume?'

Sister Althea faltered a moment before she answered, "Yee."

She let her head droop forward a little, and with her Shaker bonnet slanting downward over her deeply hidden face she looked like a toucan, except for the gaiety of colour with which Nature mocks that

strange bird's grotesqueness. She was in Shaker drabs as to her prim gown, and her shawl crossed fichu-wise upon her breast; her huge bonnet was covered with a dove-coloured satin. To the eye that could not catch a glimpse of her face, or rightly measure her figure as she sat dejected for the moment following her speech, she must have looked little and old.

The friendly person in the seat opposite began humming to himself again. He stood up before the train halted, and he said to Sister Althea, as he turned to leave the car, "Well, I wish you good evening."

"Good evening," said Sister Althea faintly; and now, when the train stopped at last, and the noises of the station began to make themselves heard outside, with the bray of a supper-gong above all, she jumped to her feet and started into the aisle as if she were going to leave the car too. She even made some steps towards the door; then she came back, and, after a moment's hesitation, she sat down again, and remained as motionless as before.

People came and took places, and arranged their wraps, and put their parcels into the racks, and settled themselves for their journey. Among the rest a woman came in,

followed by a man with a child. When he had put the child in the seat beside her, he stood talking with her till she drove him away. She said she did not want him to get off after the cars began to move. He laughed and kissed her, and after he had got almost to the door he came back and kissed her again. Sister Althea trembled at each kiss. When the man lifted the little one and kissed it, and put it down again on the seat beside its mother, the tears came into her eyes.

"Well, give my love to all the folks!" he called back from the door.

"Yes, yes!" said the woman. "Do get off, quick!"

He laughed again, and in looking back from the door he struck against a young man who was coming in. "Oh, excuse *me*!" he said, and went out while the young man came forward. He looked from side to side keenly, and then, with a smile that flashed through Sister Althea's tears, he came swiftly down the aisle to where she sat, near the end of the car.

"Well, well!" he cried, and he stood a moment with his hands upon the seat-backs, looking down at her where she sat, helpless to move her bag and parcels from her side.

"A'n't you going to let me set with you, Althea? A'n't you going to look round and let me see if it 's really you? First, I didn't know but it was Eldress Susan."

"'Sh!" said Sister Althea, and she turned up towards him the deep tunnel of her bonnet, with her young face at the bottom of it, and clutched her parcels into her lap.

He swung her bag to the floor, and let himself sink easily into the seat, and stretched his arm along the top behind her. "Oh, I guess she won't hear us," said the young man. "Did you know me when I came into the car? I don't believe you did!" He laughed, and his eyes shone. They were gay blue eyes, and his hair, now that he took his soft hat off, had glints of gold in the dun tone that the close shingling of the barber gave it. His face was clean shaven and boyishly handsome. He was dressed in a new suit of diagonals which betrayed the clothing-store; but his figure was not vulgar, though his hands, thrusting out of the coat-sleeves without the shirt-cuffs that might have partly hidden them, were large and red, and rough with work. "I saw you through the window as I came along the platform outside, and I wanted to stop and watch you. But you had your head down,

as if you wa'n't feeling any too bright, and I hurried right in. I thought you would be frightened if I didn't come in as soon as the cars stopped. But I was waiting here so long expecting the train that I forgot to get my bag checked till the last minute, and I had to run and do it after you got in. That's what kept me. Did you think I wa'n't going to be here, after all!" He let his arm drop from the seat-top, and he sought with his the little hand lying weak on the seat between them. It closed upon his fingers at their touch, and then tried to free itself, and then trembled and remained quiet. "Oh, I guess I did frighten you," he murmured fondly.

"Hush! Yee," said Althea. "But I knew you would be sure to be here. I wasn't afraid, but I was—scared a little. I was anxious. When you came in I could see it was you, but you looked so strange." She cast a glance up and down the car.

"Don't you like it?" he asked, with a smile of innocent pride and a downward look at his clothes.

"Yee, yee," she said. "But, Lorenzo, do you think—do you think you had ought to—sit in the same seat with me—so close? Won't folks——"

Lorenzo laughed securely. "Think I ought to set across the aisle, same as in meeting? I guess folks won't mind us much." In fact, in the going and coming and settling in place no one seemed to notice them. "If they do, they 'll think I 'm just your brother or some relation. It 's this old bonnet, if anything, that will make them look. I thought Friend Ella Shewall was going to lend you a hat."

"Yee, she was. But I didn't get to her house till it was almost time for the cars, and then we had to just race to the depôt. I've got the hat here in this paper, and that 's a sack in this bundle. I hadn't time to put it on, either. I was almost ready to drop when I reached Friend Ella's." He peered into the depths of the bonnet she turned towards him, and she added: "I ran nearly the whole way from Harshire to the Junction."

"Ran?"

"Yee. I couldn't get out of the house without some of the Family seeing me before dusk; and if they had I should have died. I was so *ashamed*, Lorenzo, and felt so *mean*, I can't tell you! I kept close to the walls and in the woods all I could, and I had this bag——"

Lorenzo stooped forward and lifted the bag from the floor. "You carried that all the way from Harshire to the Junction?"

"Yee."

"Well!"

"I didn't feel it. It wasn't the *bag* that was so heavy. O Lorenzo, do you think we're doing right?"

"I know we are! Why, Althea, it's what everybody does in the world-outside."

"In the world-outside, yee."

"Well, we're *in* the world-outside, ain't we?"

"Yee, I presume we are. We are going to be of the earthly order, Lorenzo; we are going to give up the angelic life! Have you thought enough of it, Lorenzo? Do you think you have? Because if you haven't——"

"Why, haven't we both thought of it till we couldn't think any more? What did Friend Ella Shewall say? Didn't she say that we ought to take our feelin' for each other as a sign from spirit-land that we were meant for each other from all eternity?"

"Yee; but she isn't living with her own husband; she's trying to get a divorce from him, and she used to be so fond of him."

"Well, then, the signs failed in her case——"

"Oh, don't laugh at it, Lorenzo! If they failed in ours, what should we have? Am I worth all you're risking for me in this world and the next? Think of it, Lorenzo! I can get out at the next stopping-place and go back to the Family; I know they'll let me; and you—— Think of it! *Am* I worth it?" She spoke in a low, intense whisper.

"Am *I*?" retorted the young man lightly.

"Oh yee! *You* are! I'd go through it all for you."

"Then I guess that settles it."

"Nay, nay; it doesn't! I'm wicked, and that's why I feel so. You don't know how bad I am. I *deceived*! It was all right for you, for you left the Family open and above board, and you told the Trustees you were going, and you made them give back your property and everything; but I *stole* away like a thief in the night; and I made Friend Ella take part in my deceit; and, Lorenzo, I don't believe there's going to be any end to it. I've told two lies already, here in this very car—just before it stopped. There was a man asked me whether I expected to meet friends at Fitchburg, and I said nay; and he asked me if I wasn't from the Family at Vardley, and I said yee, I was, and—— '

"He no business to asked you anything.'

said Lorenzo hotly, "and I d' know as you call it lyin', anyway. I a'n't friends in the sense he meant, and Vardley and Harshire, it's almost the same thing, and it don't matter which Family you come from, so you're out of it."

"Do you think so, Lorenzo?"

"Yee, I do. And now look here, Althea; you're nervous, and you can't see things in the true light, and so everything looks wrong to you. We're doing what we have a perfect right to do, and what everybody in the world-outside does, as I said before. If you had to steal away, as you call it, from the Family, whose fault was it? 'Twa'n't yours. You did it, if anything, to save their feelin's, didn't you?"

"Yee, I presume so."

"Don't you *know* you did? Now I want you to try and look at it in the light of the world-outside; for that's all the light we've got now, or that we're going to have."

A little troubled sigh exhaled from the depths of the bonnet, and Lorenzo threw himself back in despair. "Oh, well, if that's the way you're goin' to feel about it."

"Nay, nay, Lorenzo! I'm not going to. I shall be all right in a minute. I'm just

nervous, that 's all. I think just as you do about it. Wasn't I perfectly willing and glad to do it?"

"I guess you wa'n't half so willing nor half so glad as I was," said the young man, and now he drooped towards her again. "And, as you say, I had the easiest part of it, too, as far forth as getting away from the Family went. But, Althea," he added, with a touch of pride, "I haven't had a very easy time since I've been in the world-outside. 'Ta'n't but a few days, but it seems as if it was years, worrying about you all the while, and trying to sell my lot in Fitchburg, and look up something for me to do when we get back."

"Yee, we have got to think of that now, I suppose," said Althea. "In the Family it came without our thinking."

"Yee, too many things came there without our thinking," said Lorenzo resentfully. "Not that I want to talk against the Family. I presume I feel just as you do about that. Our own fathers and mothers couldn't have been better to us. But if we was to have each other, we *had* to leave 'em. There wa'n't any two ways about it. And I guess I do like to think for myself, even of my bread and butter. And I guess I've ar-

ranged for all that. I'm going into the drug business with Friend Nason."

"That used to come and buy our herbs at Harshire?"

Lorenzo nodded. "It's just the place for me. He's going to put a new remedy on the market for lung difficulty—Pulmine, he calls it,—and he wants me, because I know about herbs; it's going to be purely vegetable. He's bought my lot, too, and he's advanced me a hundred dollars on it." The young fellow leaned a little nearer and tapped his breast pocket. "I've got it with me! And I've seen the nicest little set of rooms for us to go to house-keeping in when we get back. Friend Nason calls it a flat; and I guess when you see that kitchen, Althea! Friend Nason says it's just as well we're going to Saratoga, for we sha'n't have to get a licence in York State; and if it had to be in Fitchburg, and we was to settle down there, right from the Family, it might make talk. But if we come back just like anybody else from the world-outside it'll all blow over before anybody notices. He wouldn't want it to get into the newspapers any more than we would or the Family would."

II

THE train, which had started long before, advanced by smooth leaps through the dark, and the rhythmical clangour of the wheels upon the rails lost itself in Lorenzo's tones while he talked on and mapped out the future to Althea. Already, though he had been so few days in the world-outside, he knew many things unknown to her, and he looked at everything from a point of view that she could not yet imagine. He used words that she had never heard before, and he used familiar phrases in a new sense. He spoke low, and not to lose anything he said she had to turn her deep bonnet towards him, and peer up into his face with eyes so still and solemn in their fixity that at last he laughed out.

"What are you laughing at?" she half grieved.

"Oh, nothing. Your eyes down there in that old bonnet made me think of a rabbit that I got into a hole once, and it kept

looking up at me. What is there to scare anybody, anyway, Althea?"

"Nothing. I'm not scared now."

"Well, I believe it's that bonnet, after all. Why don't you take the old thing off?"

"I don't know. They would look."

She glanced round the car at their fellow-passengers, and Lorenzo did so too. "Well, *let* them look!" he said, with a petulant impulse; and then, as if he had given way too far, he added, "They've all got their backs turned, anyway."

"So they have!" said Althea. "I took this seat at the end of the car on purpose, so they wouldn't notice me so much. I forgot about that."

Still she did not offer to remove her bonnet, and he repeated, "Why don't you take the old thing off?"

"Do you truly want me to?"

"Yee; I want to see how you'll look."

"Why, you know already how I look with my cap on."

"Got that on too?"

"Yee."

"Oh, what's the use of *yeeing* and *naying* it all the time, Althea? We've got to say yes and no after this."

"You said yee yourself half a minute *ago.*"

"Did I?" asked Lorenzo; and after a moment's thought, he said, "Well, so I did," and he laughed at himself. "But it's all that old bonnet makes me do it. I say yes to other folks straight enough. Do take it off!"

"Well, I will, if you want I should so very much," said Althea, and she kept watching his face while she began to undo the bonnet-strings.

"Want I should help you any?"

"Nay; I guess I can get along."

"There 's that nay again!" said Lorenzo desperately, and they both laughed. "Take off your cap, too. Wouldn't you just as lives?"

"Yee, if you say so."

"There it goes again!" And they laughed together, but very softly, so that the other passengers should not notice. The woman with the child was making up a bed on the seat in front of her for the little one; she looked over her shoulder a moment, but she did not seem to take them in with her vague glance. Althea stopped untying her bonnet-strings, and then went on. She lifted the drab tunnel from her head at last, and showed the wire-framed gauze cap, closely fitted to her head. "Now the cap," said the *young man*, and she untied that too,

and took it off, and turned her face full upon him.

She looked like a pretty boy, with her dark hair cropped to her head all round, and her severe turn-down collar, which came so high up on her throat that her soft round chin almost touched it. She had dark eyes, very tender and truthful, a little straight nose, and a mouth that smiled unspeakable question at the young man with its red lips; delicate brows arched themselves above her dove-like eyes, and her forehead was a smooth and white wall to the edge of her hair. The ugly bonnet had served well to keep her complexion fair; its in-doors pallor had now a faint flush in it.

Lorenzo caught his breath, and turned his face with a slight cough.

"What is the matter? Have you got a cold?" she asked.

"Nay. It seemed as if my heart skipped a beat. I guess it was the surprise."

"Do I surprise you very much, Lorenzo?" her pretty lips entreated fondly. "Do I look so very funny? You made me do it!"

"Nay, nay! You look—beautiful, Althea. I don't know as I ought to say it, Althea, but I didn't know how beautiful you was before." He stared at her so helplessly

and awe-strickenly that she could not help laughing.

"You 're fine-appearing, too, Lorenzo. I noticed it when you came into the car. I presume it 's my hair that makes me look so funny. But it isn't half as short as yours," she said, with an arch glance at his hair as far as it showed itself under his hat. He took his hat off, and she pressed her hand against her mouth to keep from laughing too loud. "I guess we 're a pair of them!"

He still sat embarrassed, looking at her and studying every little motion of her head and face as she put her cap inside her bonnet, and made as if to tie the string of the bonnet over both. "But maybe," she said, "you want I should put them on again?"

"Nay," he began, and she mocked him with "*Nay!* There it is again!" But he would not laugh.

"Althea, I don't hardly feel as if I had any right to you. It's all well enough to talk, but I didn't know that till you looked —the way you do look; and if you say, I 'll give up right now."

"And what shall *I* do if you give up now?" she asked, with eyes full of laughter.

"That 's true," he sighed.

"I didn't know how well you looked, either, till I saw you with that suit of clothes on."

"Do you like them?" he asked, with a proud glance at the sleeves of his coat and the legs of his trousers. "I had to pay twenty dollars for the suit. Friend Nason thought it was a good deal—he went with me—but he said he guessed I better have them if I was going off with you; I'd get more comfort out of them than what I would a cheaper suit."

"Yee," said Althea thoughtfully. "If we're in the world-outside we have got to do the same as the rest." She drew a little away from him to add, with a touch of tender reproach, "But I began to feel foolish about *you*, Lorenzo, long before I saw you in that suit of clothes—as foolish as I *ever* could."

"And I felt foolish about you when I couldn't hardly see your face in the bottom of that bonnet, let alone know what a pretty head you had, or anything. It was something the way you walked—I'd know —and your—your waist, Althea——"

She turned away from him to take up the parcel on the other side. She put it in her lap, and asked, "Do you want I

should show you the sack Friend Ella lent me?"

"Why, yee; of course!"

"She said it was quite the fashion." Althea undid it and held it up and whirled it about, so that the jet-trimming would show, and she made him feel the texture of the silk. "Now, I'll try it on if you want I should." She flung it across his knees, and unpinned the Shaker shawl from over her breast, and let it fall from her shoulders. She stopped suddenly with a fiery flush.

"What is it?" asked Lorenzo. He looked in the direction of her eyes, and saw one of the men passengers coming straight down the car towards them; but the man went on to the water-cooler in the corner just beyond them, and after he had solemnly filled himself up from the tank there he lumbered back to his place again at the other end of the car. They looked at each other as people do who have had a narrow escape. Althea pulled the shawl up on her shoulders again. "I guess I'll wait till morning to put it on."

"Yee, just as well," said Lorenzo, and he could not have seen the filmy shade of disappointment that passed over her face. "What are you going to do with that old thing?"

He touched her Shaker bonnet, and she glanced down at it. "Oh, keep it, I presume," she sighed—"keep it always. Any rate, I shall keep it till morning." She tied it up with the paper that had wrapped her sack.

Lorenzo rose from the seat and stood beside it. "Look here, Althea, I'm going back into the sleeping-car here to get a place for you, so you can rest comfortable. I don't want you should sit up here all night."

"What are you going to do?"

"Oh, I can set up well enough——"

"Then so can I, too! And I'm going to stay here with you."

"Now, Althea, you just let me have my own way about this. I took the place for you before the car reached Fitchburg, and it's paid for, and you might as well use it."

She would have protested further, but he had already left her, and she vainly appealed to him with her entreating eyes when he looked back at her over his shoulder.

While he was gone she unwrapped the hat that she had borrowed from Friend Ella Shewall, and put it on at the little mirror by the water-cooler. Then she dropped her Shaker shawl over her arm, and sat down again to wait.

When Lorenzo came back he started at sight of her. "Well, well!" he said.

"Do you like it?" she cooed back at him.

"Well, I should think so!"

He began to pick up her bundles, and she stood outside of the seat to give him a chance. "I thought I wouldn't like to have them see me in my Family shawl and my short hair," she explained.

"I guess they wouldn't noticed much," said Lorenzo. "There a'n't anybody up but the porter. Well, it's all ready." He stopped, and let some of the parcels fall back into the seat, and stood staring at her.

"What is it?"

"Nothing," he answered; and then he said thickly, "I was just thinking how you would look in a dress that I saw a girl have on at Fitchburg to-day." She felt his eyes on her waist, but she did not mind; she laughed for pleasure; she liked to know he thought she had a pretty waist; he might just as well. He affected to turn it off with a practical remark: "That dress looks a little Shaker yet. Perhaps it won't when you've got the sack on over it. Anyway, we can get something ready-made at Saratoga. I don't believe you'll ever get any-

thing that 'll fit you much better," he gasped, in helpless adoration.

The girl's face fell a little. "Yee. Sister Miranda made it. She said she was afraid she took almost too much pride in it. I did hate to leave without saying good-bye to her!"

"Yee," said the young fellow gravely.

The black porter from the sleeping-car came in briskly, and after a glance up and down their car to make sure of his passenger he came and took Althea's bags and parcels from Lorenzo's passive hands. "This way, lady," he said.

She looked at Lorenzo, and he nodded. "I guess he can show you."

"Good night," she said, following the porter out.

"Well, good night," answered Lorenzo. He sat down in the seat now empty of her form, and pulled his hat over his eyes.

III.

IT was bright day when she came back to him from the sleeping-car, but he had not yet awakened. She stood looking down at him and smiling, and presently he started awake and stared distractedly up at her before he could pull himself together and say, "Well, well! Did you sleep pretty well?"

"I *rested* pretty well," she answered. "How did you?"

Lorenzo laughed. "I guess I slept pretty well, but I don't believe I rested very much. But I've got the whole day to rest in now." Althea had Friend Ella Shewall's hat and sack both on, and she waited for him to realise the fact before she sat down. "Well, well," he said, in recognition, "that sack *is* me."

"Well?" she urged, as if she felt a disappointment in his tone.

"Well, what do *you* think?"

"It don't seem to go exactly with the dress."

"Nay," said Lorenzo, with his laugh. "It makes you look like the world-outside one-half, and the other half Shaker."

"Yee, it does," said Althea forlornly; her chin trembled a little, and her eyes threatened tears. "I guess it's all we're ever going to be, too, Lorenzo: half Shaker and half world-outside," she added bitterly. "I guess I better go back into the sleeping-car and put on my old shawl and bonnet again."

"No such a thing!" cried Lorenzo. "I guess we'll see about that when we get to Saratoga — we must be pretty near there now. Set right down here, and I'll go back for your things."

"Nay, the coloured man said he would bring them." Althea sank into the seat and got out the handkerchief, broad as a napkin, which she had brought from the Family with her, and wiped the tears from her eyes. Then she bowed her face into it, and her little frame shook with the sobs she smothered.

"Well! well!" groaned Lorenzo, in an anguish of tenderness.

Althea suddenly took her handkerchief away and controlled her face. "There! I am ashamed, Lorenzo."

"Nay, don't you say that, Althea. You 've got just as much right to cry as anybody, and I *want* you should cry."

"Nay, I've got through now," said Althea; and to prove it she smiled up into his face so radiantly that he laughed, and she laughed with him.

The porter with her bag and parcels perhaps thought he had arrived at a fortunate moment. He set the bag respectfully at her feet, and kept a smiling face on Lorenzo while he arranged the parcels almost decoratively on her lap. Then he lingered a moment; the smile died on his face, and he went mournfully away. They both felt the gloom in his manner, and were sensible of a vague reproach in it.

"What was it, Lorenzo?" she asked.

"Well, that was just what I was going to ask you, Althea," said Lorenzo. They wondered over the incident so sadly closed, and their minds were not wholly taken from it until they drew in sight of Saratoga and the train began to slow. They ran along the backs of some simple houses whose yards and gardens were shorn off by the track, and then the vast bulks of the hotels began to show among the foliage that everywhere masses itself over the town. "This must

be it," said Lorenzo, and they looked at each other in a sudden fright. "No use being scared about it now," he added, as he resolutely gathered up Althea's belongings and stood aside to let her get out of the car. The conductor, who took her elbow to help her down from it, let Lorenzo shift for himself, and the embarrassment they felt was relieved for them both by his dropping some of the parcels, and their having to pick them up from under the feet of the crowd thronging into the station. She made him let her keep some of them now, and they passed through the station to the street beyond, where there was a clamour of carriage drivers, and a rank of stately hacks and barouches, and light, wood-coloured surreys and phaetons. The drivers swarmed upon them, but as they stood silent and motionless under their burdens the drivers dropped off one by one, like dogs that have rushed out at a passer and have failed to make the expected impression upon him. At last they were free, and they walked from the station under the flank of a mighty hotel into a wide street, where they found it one hot of many, with sweeping piazzas and narrow pillars springing into the air like the stems of tall young trees. The street was fresh

watered, and smelled of the dampened dust; it was set with elms, and under their arches stood vehicles of the same sort and variety as those at the station. Some drove slowly up and down through the sun and shadow; but their drivers, after a glance at Lorenzo and Althea struggling along under their parcels, intelligently forbore to invite them to a morning drive.

"I guess we sha'n't want to go to any hotel just yet," said Lorenzo. "We can get breakfast at an eating-house, if we can find one."

"Yee," Althea timidly assented.

They had to walk up and down a long while before they found an eating-house. Lorenzo began to be afraid there was nothing but hotels in Saratoga. They trudged along, staring at all the signs, and the shopkeepers, sweeping the dust of their floors across the pavement to the gutters, had to stop for them to get slowly by or else sweep it against them. Althea knew that Lorenzo looked well, but she was smitten with a sense of her own inadequate appearance, and she tried to shrink as much out of sight as possible.

"Here 's one at last," said Lorenzo, stopping at a doorway. "Go right in, Althea," he added to her at a certain faltering she

showed. "It's all right. It's just like the one Friend Nason took me to in Fitchburg."

It seemed very splendid with its mirrors and marble-topped tables and bent-wood chairs, and it overcame Althea with the surprise and then the indifference it showed in the shining black waiter who came forward after a moment, as if their custom were not expected or much wanted at that hour in the morning. But Lorenzo was not afraid. He asked if they could have something to eat; and then the waiter said he guessed so, and he took their parcels and set them against the wall by the table he chose for them. Little groups of flies had knotted themselves into rosettes on the marble where it seemed to have been imperfectly cleansed; others paraded across it in black files. There were a great many flies in the long, narrow saloon, and the air within was faint and dull, as if it were the air of the evening before, and had been up all night there. A man was wiping a marble counter with a soda fountain at one end of it. At the rear of the room a boy was taking down the chairs which stood on the tables with their legs up.

Lorenzo asked Althea what she wanted for breakfast, and when she could not think he told the coloured man he guessed they would

have beefsteak and coffee and hot biscuit. The coloured man said they had no hot biscuit yet, and he suggested hot cakes.

"Well, hot cakes, then," said Lorenzo; and he said to Althea that he guessed hot cakes would be full as well anyway.

Before he brought their breakfast the waiter spread a large napkin over the marble before them, and that forced the flies into a momentary exile. They rose into the air, but they did not go far; they remained circling round overhead and humming angrily till Lorenzo's order came, and then they settled down upon the table again, and brought with them apparently all the other flies they knew.

The steak was very juicy and tender, and when the cakes came from the place where an old negro stood frying them on a slab of soapstone with gas-jets underneath they were very good too. But the coffee was green in colour when they had poured their small jugs of milk into it, and thick with grounds.

"Not much like our cocoa at the Family," said Lorenzo, for a joke.

Althea let fall a small "Nay" like a tear, and pushed her cup a little from her without seeming to know it.

But Lorenzo had seen the act of repul-

sion, and he called over his shoulder to the waiter, who stood behind him watching Althea, "Haven't you got any cocoa?"

"Chocolate," said the waiter, impassively. "That do?"

Lorenzo saw Althea's face brighten, and he said, "Yee—yes, I *should* say," and then Althea and he laughed together at the joke that puzzled the waiter. They were very gay over their breakfast when he came back with the chocolate, though they were dashed a little at going when the same gloom that they had noticed in the sleeping-car porter fell upon their waiter, after Lorenzo had gathered up all the change he had brought them.

"What is it, Lorenzo, seems to come over them so at the last? He was so polite when we sat down, and took our bundles and everything, and he didn't even offer to hand them back when we left."

IV.

THEY were out on the sidewalk again, and were pushing aimlessly ahead under their burdens. The air felt fresher outside, and a breeze had begun to stir. "I don't know," said Lorenzo. "I guess they're rather changeable, that's all. Now, Althea, I can see that you're troubled about that dress of yours, and I want you should go into some of these stores with me and see if we can't match your sack better."

"Do you truly, Lorenzo?" she returned, in a flutter of pleasure. "Well!"

"Yee, I want to see you in something a little more seasonable. It's summer, and I'd like you to have—well, a white dress, I believe."

"But that wouldn't go any better with the sack than this one."

"Well, I guess we can find a sack that it *will* go with, then," said Lorenzo. "I always heard that they got married in white, anyway. I want you should look like other folks."

"Yee," Althea assented, a little faint with her consciousness.

They passed a good many stores where there were dresses hanging at the doors or in the windows, but Lorenzo showed himself very fastidious; and though Althea thought some of them would do, he would only say that they could come back if they did not see anything that suited them better.

"I saw some dresses in a store under that big hotel down yonder a piece, and I want to ask about them first. Didn't you notice them?"

"Yee, I did. But isn't it rather of a fashionable place?"

"That 's just what I 'm looking for," said Lorenzo, and Althea laughed tremulously.

When they came down opposite the hotel he boldly led the way across the street, and would not let her falter at the shop door. "Now you come right in, Althea. I know more about the world-outside than you do," he said, in an imperative whisper.

He was blushing, too, though, when he set their things down on the floor, and a tall, handsome woman came flowingly forward to meet them, between counters gay with hats and bonnets, and clothes-trees with sacks and jackets, and figure-frames with gowns

that swept the floor with silken trains. The shopwoman looked at them with a blush as bright as their own or brighter, but subdued to a softer effect by the film of powder that had got a little into her eyebrows.

She glanced inquiringly from one to the other, and at Althea's vain gasp she said to Lorenzo, as if he were an old man of the world, and they could understand each other perhaps better, "Is there something I could show madam?"

"Yee, there is," said Lorenzo. "We wanted to get some kind of a dress, if they a'n't all too dear."

"We have all prices," said the woman, and she touched different gowns as she spoke. "Seventy-five dollars, one fifty, sixty-two and a half, forty-five."

"You wanted something in cotton goods, didn't you, Althea?" asked Lorenzo, artfully, so as both to escape from the offer of these garments, which he did not wish to discredit by refusing them, and to bring Althea into the transaction.

"Yee, I did." And when Lorenzo whispered, "*Yes*—don't say *yee*," she promptly retorted, in undertone, "*You* keep saying it too." And as if she had plucked up courage from inculpating him, she added to the

shopwoman, "I should like something th would go with this sack and hat."

"Oh, well, then," said the shopwoman, if she now understood exactly, and in a to that transferred her allegiance instant from Lorenzo to Althea, "I have somethi here very pretty and very cheap," and s took up from a heap of dainty dress thrown across a table a frock of whi muslin, trimmed with ends and knots cherry ribbon, and fluttered over with la and ruching and ruffling. "This is *ve* cheap," she said, looking at the tag on i and then drawing it over her arm with h right hand and holding it out to survey with a glance of her sidelong head, in whic there was an eye that studied both t young lovers. "It is quite a dream—an imported. It would fit you perfectl madam. We're about at the end of o season for summer things now, and yo could have this—it's marked thirty-five- for twenty-five."

Lorenzo stood agape, but Althea did n seem to know that he was even there. Sh was rapt in the ecstasy of the pretty dres "Could—would you let me try it on first?

"Why, certainly, madam. Just com with me."

Althea followed like one led by a spell. Lorenzo sat down on one of the revolving stools before a show-case filled with ribbons, with Althea's bags and parcels at his feet. It seemed to him that he sat there a long time. While he waited the shopwoman drifted in twice — once to fetch away a coquettish cape from one of the clothes-trees, and once to take a gauze hat from a peg. Then nothing happened for a time; and he had begun to wonder what was keeping Althea when he lifted his downcast eyes and beheld a vision.

It was Althea and it was not Althea. It was Althea as she would look, he suddenly thought, in the spirit-life, if spirits could be as beautiful as people on the earth, and have some of the danger in them. He could only deeply murmur, "Well, well!" and stare and stare.

"Will it do?" she entreated, with a smile that had a heavenly splendour in it.

He shut his mouth and swallowed, and then opened it again, but he could not speak.

"*I* think," said the shopwoman, "that madam looks superb in that dress, and she must have the cape with it. Her black sack is very nice, but it's a little out of

style, and it 's rather more of a spring and fall garment. Don't you think the hat is very becoming, too? The ribbon is the same as that on the dress." She touched a knot of it on the hat, and another knot of it on Althea's breast, and Lorenzo felt as if his own heart were under the place. "As the season is passing I can let you have them at the same reduction as the dress. I should have wanted twenty-five for the cape at the beginning of the month, and fifteen for the hat. You can have them both now for twenty-five—just fifty in all. And there isn't a stitch needed in any of them."

"They do seem to fit," said Lorenzo.

"She could wear them into the street this moment," said the woman.

Althea said nothing. She let her eyes fall.

"I guess we shall have to take them," said Lorenzo, and he got his pocket-book out.

Althea turned suddenly upon him. "Don't you do it unless you feel you 'd ought to, Lorenzo. If it isn't right, I don't want you should do it."

"Oh, I guess it 's all right," said Lorenzo, and the shopwoman confirmed him in the opinion.

"It would be simply wicked for madam not to have them."

"Yee, it *would*!" said Lorenzo more heartily, and he paid the bills over on the counter.

The woman took them with an absent air, as if she too were bewitched with the beauty she had adorned. "The hat would look ever so much better, of course," she said, "if madam's hair was the natural length. You must come back when it's grown out, and let me show you another."

It seemed a joke, and they laughed. Lorenzo said boldly, "Yee, we will." And then he said, to help get away, "Well, Althea, I guess we must be going."

"Oh, then, madam will wear the things at once? Well, that is right. Where did you say I should send the old ones?"

The shopwoman addressed Lorenzo, and he blushed—he did not know why. "Well, we haven't gone to any hotel yet. Could—could we leave them here a little while?"

"Certainly, by all means," said the woman. "What name?"

"Well," said Lorenzo, and he thought a moment, "I guess you better just put Lorenzo Weaver on."

"Very well," said the shopwoman, and

she wrote it down on a piece of paper which she pinned to the sack Friend Ella Shewall had lent Althea. In the midst of all that finery it now looked very common and shabby. Lorenzo said he would come round for the things a little later, and she said, politely, "Oh, any time!" and she followed them to the door. "I *wish*," she said, "I could have seen madam with her hair long. It's such a pretty shade. Cut off in sickness, I suppose."

"Yee," said Lorenzo; and as they issued upon the sidewalk he was aware that Althea shrank from him, perhaps rather spiritually than corporeally, and yet really. "I know," he pleaded, "that I oughtn't to have said that, Althea, and I hated to do it as much as you would. But what could I do?"

"Nay, we seem to have to tell lies whenever folks speak to us," said Althea sadly.

"Well, it a'n't lying exactly, or it a'n't so considered in the world-outside. It's considered just the same as putting folks off. I suppose we've got to conform in such things."

"Oh yee," she sighed.

They walked along in an unhappy silence still Lorenzo said, "Those shoes, Althea, don't seem to go exactly with the rest."

He looked down at the little feet which flatly patted the ground in the roomy gear of the Family.

She looked down at them too, and she assented in a rueful "Nay."

"I want to see if we can't find you something a little more like," he said; and he laughed to see a slight lift come at once into Althea's gait.

The young man in the shoe-store made Althea sit down for him to unlace her shoe, and then when he had put on the russet ties, which he said were the thing she wanted, felt her foot all over, to see that the fit was perfect, Lorenzo thought that they ought to have a woman for that, and he could see Althea blushing and shrinking, as if she thought so too; but he noticed another young woman trying on pair after pair of shoes under the same conditions, and he decided to say nothing about what was so plainly the custom of the world-outside. The shoes were certainly very pretty, and when Althea suffered him to see the points, the very sharp points of them, beyond her skirt, it seemed to him that her feet had gone to nothing in them. "A'n't they a little tight, Althea? No use getting shoes that will hurt you."

"They don't feel so," said Althea, conscientiously.

"You 'll find more room in a sharp-pointed shoe, lady," said the shopman, ignoring Lorenzo in the matter, "than you will in a broad-pointed. Keep them on? All right. Where shall I send the old ones?"

Lorenzo explained, as he had to the modiste, that they had not got a hotel yet, and he asked if he might not call for the shoes later, and he had them marked with his name. "Seems to me you're a good deal taller than you were before, Althea," he said, when they were out on the sidewalk again.

"Yee; these shoes have got heels, and they seem to be pretty high." She no longer swung forward with the free gait he had always thought so beautiful, but walked mincingly, like the fashionably dressed ladies of the world-outside, whom they now began to meet more and more. He thought Althea was as well dressed as any of them, and he made her come into a gay little shop with him and choose a parasol. "Got to have something to keep the sun off, now your old bonnet's gone." And Althea laughed with him at the thought of it. She chose a white parasol with white silk fringe, and

when the shopwoman suggested gloves she chose a pair of white ones, which the woman put on for her. Lorenzo bought her a lace handkerchief, and the woman showed her how to tuck it in at the waist of her dress, where she said handkerchiefs were worn now.

"Lorenzo," Althea said, with coquettish severity, when they were in the street again, "I'm not going another step with you unless you get something for yourself now."

"What do you want I should get?" he asked fondly, with his heart in his throat.

"You ought to know," she returned, almost pertly.

"Well," said Lorenzo, "I been thinking I'd look full better in this hot weather with a straw hat."

"Yee, you would," said Althea; and they went into a men's furnishing store, where the shopman advised a straw hat with a very low crown and a very wide brim, and a deep ribbon with vertical stripes of red and blue. Lorenzo took it, and he took a necktie of white silk, which he was advised was the latest style, and he put it on at a little mirror in the back of the store. When he came forward with his new hat on a little slanted, he could see the glow of pride in his looks which came into Althea's face.

"Like it?" he asked. But it seemed as if she were too full to speak, and he resumed, carelessly, after he had given the shopman his name, and promised to call for his old hat and tie, "I don't know but we'd full as well go to some hotel now, Althea, and get our things sent there."

"Well, if you say so, Lorenzo," she answered demurely.

"I declare, I don't know which one to go to, though," said Lorenzo. "We sha'n't be here often, I presume, and I should like to go to the very best; but if we asked anybody we shouldn't know whether they were right or not about it."

They stopped and stood looking up and down the street at the different hotels as they showed themselves in the perspective, but they could not make a choice.

"I wish we had asked that woman at the dress-store," said Lorenzo dreamily; and Althea assented with an anxious, "Yee, she could have told."

"We might go and ask her now," said Lorenzo, "and yet I kind of hate to."

The driver of a gay, wood-coloured surrey, who was slowly working his horses up and down with an eye abroad for custom, placed his own interpretation on the wistful air of

the young couple standing at the edge of the sidewalk and looking into the street. He pulled up beside them before they were aware. "Carriage? Take you to the Lake for a dollar! Drive?"

Lorenzo hastily whispered Althea, "We could ask *him* which is the best, on the way. And—and, Althea, we have got to ask somebody about a minister!" She questioned his meaning with her eyes, and he added, "To marry us."

She flushed and looked down, and admitted faintly, "Yee."

"The driver could take us to a good one."

The driver waited patiently for the end of their conference, though they had not yet answered a word. He suggested, "Take you through the principal streets first, and not charge you anything more."

"I guess we better, Althea," said Lorenzo; and she let him help her into the surrey with a soft "Well."

V.

THE driver looked sharply round at them, and then turned about to his horses again. As he drove by the United States, and the Grand Union, and Congress Hall, and out past the Windsor, he named the different great hotels to them, and Lorenzo caught at the chance to ask him which was the best. "Well, I don't know as I could hardly make a choice between the four biggest. It depends on what you want for your money." He leaned half round, so as to converse with his passengers at his ease, and lightly controlled his slim sorrels with his left hand, while he stretched his right arm along the back of the seat. "If you want old-family business, I should go to the States; and if you want all the earth can give in the way of solid comfort, I sh'd go to Congress Hall; and if you want something very tony, I sh'd go to the Windsor; but if you 're in for all the life you can get, and all the distinguished visitors, and the

big politicians, and style, and jewellery, and full band all the while, you want to go to the Grand Union. That's where *I'd* go if I was in Saratoga for a good time; but tastes differ, and there a'n't a word to say against the other big hotels, or any house in the place, as far as *I've* heard from 'em. Lady object to smokin'?" The driver suddenly addressed himself to Lorenzo. "Because if she don't I'll finish my cigar." He spoke with the unlighted remnant of a cigar between his teeth.

Lorenzo looked at Althea, and she said, "Nay, I don't mind."

A smile ran up into the hard, averted cheek of the driver. He was a slim young fellow, who wore his straw hat at an impudent angle, and had a handsome face full of wicked wisdom; at the same time there was something like a struggle of conscience in the restraint from impertinence which he put upon himself. "If you'll just take these lines a second," he said, giving them into Lorenzo's hand; and then he lighted a match and exhaled his thanks with the first whiff of his cigar. "I can always talk so much better when I'm smokin', but I don't never like to smoke when my passengers object." He started up his horses briskly,

and pointed out the objects of interest as he passed them. "That's Congress Park. You want to come here in the afternoon for the music—Troy band—and there's a balloon ascension there to-day; that's something you don't want to miss." He said, more especially for Althea's behoof, "Lady goes up." He let them look a moment at the pretty park with its stretch of level lawn, and its pavilion and kiosk, its fountain, and its amphitheatrical upland, with a roofage of darker and lighter green propped on tall pine and oak tree stems, and then he jerked his head towards a building on the left. "That's the Saratoga Club. Gamblin' place," he explained to their innocence. "Lots of money changes hands every night. German prince dropped ten thousand there one night, and he didn't take the whole night for it either. It's a gay place, if it *don't* look it." In fact, with its discreetly drawn curtains, its careful keeping of grass and flowers, the club-house looked in the bright morning sun like the demure dwelling of some rich man who did not care to flaunt his riches. "Indian encampment," said the driver, with another nod to the left, a little further up the hill. "Get your fortune *told* there; shooting-gallery, Punch and

Judy, and a little of everything." He nodded at a splendid villa on the right, with an auctioneer's sign upon it. "One of our leadin' gamblers' house. Cost him eighty thousand dollars, and won't bring twenty under the hammer. Got caught in the panic. Took to speculatin'. Been all right if he 'd stuck to the cards," he concluded, as if this were the moral.

Lorenzo's mind worked with rustic slowness through a cloud of worldly ignorance, and the driver had time to point out several other notable residences on the handsome avenue which they were passing through, and told them that it was the way to the horse-races, and that they ought to be in Saratoga for the races, before Lorenzo could get round to ask, "But a'n't it against the law to gamble?"

"It's against the gospel too, I guess," said the driver, "but you wouldn't know it in Saratoga. It 's the gamblin' and the racin' that makes the place." He spoke with that pride which people feel in their local evils if they are very great. He swept his passengers with his hardy eye, as if for full enjoyment of any horror he had raised in them, and ended: "And there a'n't but one single minister here that *I* ever heard of

that's had the gall to say a word against hoss-racin'. That's what Saratoga is."

His point was lost to them in the thought that came into both their minds at once. Lorenzo whispered it: "Wouldn't that be the one?"

"I don't know," Althea began. Then she said boldly, "Yee, it would. Ask who it is."

It took courage; but Lorenzo was leaning forward to put the question, when the driver turned round upon them and said, "But if it a'n't one thing it's another, and I don't suppose Saratoga's any worse than any other place *in the world-outside.*"

He pronounced the last words slowly, but with no apparent consciousness that they must have a peculiar effect with Lorenzo and Althea, who mutely shrank together at them. "You ought to let me fetch you here in the afternoon if you want to see life," the driver went on carelessly. "It's a string of carriages going out one side, and a string coming in on the other. Or it is," he added, more candidly, "in the season. It's full early yet."

It was Althea who commanded herself first. When the danger of discovery seemed past Lorenzo was still silent, but she began to talk and to ask the driver questions,

which he answered, "*Yes*, ma'am," and "*No*, ma'am," with a crowing stress on the opening word that seemed personal to her at first, and then only personal to himself. But it was as if he had to be held in check continually from taking liberties, and it tasked all the severity Althea had learned in teaching the girls' school at the Family to manage him. Lorenzo was no help to her; but she held her own, even upon ground so strange to her.

When they reached the wayside restaurant at the end of the lake, he said, Well, here they were, if they wanted to get a lemonade or anything; and he added to Lorenzo, "Be a dollar; I sha'n't charge you anything extra for showin' you round first, as I *said*."

"I thought," said Lorenzo to Althea, as they followed passively the lead of the waiter who was showing them to a table on the verandah of the house, "that it meant taking us back, too. Didn't you, Althea?"

"Yee," Althea whispered, in return. "But I'm glad it didn't. I don't believe I like him very much. We can take another carriage back."

"Oh yee."

They could see far up the lovely lake, from their table, and beyond a stretch of level the noble range of nearer uplands and further

mountains that frames the Saratoga lan scape on the northward.

"It 's sightly, Althea," Lorenzo murmure and she answered in the same underton "Yee, it is."

She spoke vaguely, for she was noticin the people who were sitting about at t other tables, and trying to make out wh kind of people they were. There was o group of rather noisy girls, who had ve yellow hair and bright cheeks, and w seemed to her like a bevy of harsh, brillia birds; their eyes shone glassily when th turned to look at her. A family party father and mother, and children who had be constantly checked and controlled we at another table. At another still a pair later-middle life, who sat at their half-eat ices, seemed to be studying the rest, a Althea could feel that Lorenzo and she we peculiarly interesting to this pair.

"They are talking about us," she said Lorenzo.

"Well," he returned, after a long draug of his lemonade—he had ordered that becau the driver had mentioned lemonade—"th can't say anything against *you*, Althea."

"I wonder if they live in Saratoga," s said.

"What makes you ask that?"

"I don't know," she answered faintly, and she looked down. "Don't you think they are very nice appearing?"

"Yee, I do," said Lorenzo, after a moment. "We 've got to ask somebody about a minister, I presume," he mused aloud, "sooner or later."

A quick red and white dyed and then blanched Althea's face. "There's no—hurry. I like keeping *so*, don't you, Lorenzo?"

"Oh yee. But we can't keep so always."

"Nay."

"I do declare, when that fellow spoke up so about the world-outside I didn't know which way to look. Althea, if you think those friends reside here, and it would do to ask *them* about a minister——"

"Nay," she whispered back in a sudden panic, "you mustn't!"

"Well, I won't then."

They had to pass the elderly couple in going out, and Althea heard the gentleman say to the lady: "It 's quite the nun look."

"Yes. I don't understand," the lady answered. "Beautiful—lovely—pure! It 's like a child's—an angel's."

They were both looking up the lake, where the little excursion steamer was coming in *sight*.

VI.

LORENZO and Althea found a number of carriages standing outside, but the drivers all said they were engaged. The driver who had brought them was sitting under a tree smoking. He waited for them to ask the others, and then he called out briskly to them, as if he had never seen them before, "Carriage?"

They looked at each other. "It would be too far to walk back," Lorenzo suggested.

"It would dust this dress," said Althea, "and I can't seem to walk so well in these shoes."

Lorenzo turned to the driver, who had now come up to them. "What will you charge to take us back to town?"

The driver reflected. "Well, I've got to go back pretty soon anyway. I'll leave it to you."

"If it was worth a dollar to bring us here," said Lorenzo firmly, "it's worth a dollar to take us back; and it a'n't worth any more."

"All right," said the man, and he jumped to his seat. "Where do you want I should leave you?" he asked, turning round to them when they were seated, while his sorrels started gaily off of themselves. "Leave you at Congress Park, if you say so. It 's central, and you could set down in there, and think what you wanted to do next."

They felt an impertinence in his suggestion, but it expressed their minds, and Lorenzo assented with a stiff "All right." He received some remarks of the driver's so forbiddingly that he left them quite to themselves until they reached the park.

When they dismounted at the upper gate he took Lorenzo's dollar with a certain hesitation. "I don't know as I 'd ought to charge you so much for just bringin' you back." He looked at them, and then suddenly turned upon Lorenzo: "Say, a'n't you up from Lebanon? You 're Shakers, anyway!"

"Nay," returned Lorenzo angrily, "we are *not*."

"Nays have it," said the young fellow. Without looking round at them, he hollowed out his hands about the match he struck, and lighted a cigar at it while he drove up

the street at a slow walk, with the lines held between his knees.

"O Lorenzo," cried Althea, "we *are*! You *know* we are! How could you say it?"

"Well, Althea, we *a'n't* from Lebanon!"

"Oh, you know it wasn't that you denied. We *are* Shakers. Run after him—run after him, and tell him so, no matter what happens!"

"Well, well! But just as you *say*, Althea. I don't want to tell a lie any more than you do."

Lorenzo started and ran up the street after the carriage, calling out, "Say! Hello! Stop there a minute!" The driver stopped and looked round. Lorenzo did not give himself time to falter after he came up. "We *are* Shakers. Yee, we are! What is it to you?" he added, in defiance.

"Oh, nothing," said the young fellow. "I'm from down around Lebanon myself. Been at the Family there many a time. Just wanted to see if you'd lie about it; always heard a Shaker wouldn't lie."

"Well, we're *not* from Lebanon!" Lorenzo retorted, with futile resentment.

"All right," said the driver. "Lookin' for a minister?"

The answer seemed to fly out of Lorenzo's mouth of itself: "Yee, we are."

"I thought so," said the driver. "Well, I know the whitest man in *this* town, and I can take you to him if you want to get married. Take you and the lady there, and it sha'n't cost you a cent. Say!" He drew from his waistcoat-pocket the dollar bill which Lorenzo had just given him, and handed it to him. "You just take that, and if he a'n't all I tell you, you *keep* it. I don't want any man's money without I earn it."

"All right," said Lorenzo, and he put the bill in his pocket and walked back to Althea in a kind of daze, while the carriage slowly followed. "Althea, he says *he* knows a good minister."

"Get right in, lady," said the driver. "If you 're all right, I guess you won't feel but what *he* is. Well, I 'll tell you what! He 's the one—and he 's the only one—that 's got the gall to preach against hoss-racin'."

He looked as if his words must carry conviction; the lovers were helpless before them, and they mounted to the place they had so lately left. The driver turned reassuringly to Althea again. "Now don't

you be anxious any. If you don't like his looks you just come right out again, and I'll take you anywheres else you want to go—and I know every minister in the place—and no extra charge."

They had not even to go inside for the test the driver proposed. The minister himself answered Lorenzo's ring; he pushed open the lattice door that opened outwardly, and scanned them from the threshold with a face that seemed kind and gentle as well as shrewd. Lorenzo and Althea looked at each other without being able to speak.

The driver spoke for them from his carriage, where he waited to see whether they should find the minister at home. "*Good* morning, dominie! I want you to take care of these folks. Friends of mine."

The minister looked up at him from under brows that frowned in the strong sunlight, and then laughed in recognition. "I hope they have some better recommendation. Will you walk in?" he asked of the young couple, and he held the door open for them to enter, and shut it upon them in the cool, dark entry, without further notice of the driver. Then he led them into a dim parlour, and when he had made a little more light in it by turning the slats of one of the

blinds, he asked them if they would not sit down. He said he would be with them in a moment, and he went out, as if to still the clamour of children's voices which made themselves heard from the rear of the house, and then were silent

VII.

ALTHEA clutched Lorenzo nervously by the coat-sleeve in the twilight of the parlour, and whispered, "O Lorenzo, do you think we'd better?"

"Yes, I do, Althea. It would be ridiculous to back out now. We've got to do it."

"Yes, I presume we have. But not—not unless you wish it as much as ever you did."

"I do, full as much. Don't you, Althea?"

"Oh yes—yes. Will it take—very long?"

book in his hand. He sat down and faced them gravely smiling, and pushed softly backward and forward in the rocking-chair he had taken. After waiting for them to speak, he asked, "Is there something I can do for you?"

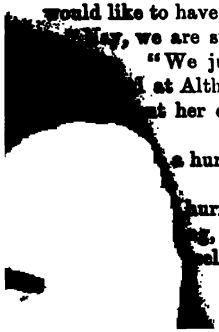
He looked at Lorenzo, who glanced in turn at Althea; she met his eye with a mute reproach that made him speak.

"Yee, there is. We—we some thought of gettin'—married."

"Well," said the minister, still smiling, "that is rather serious business, though people seem not to think so always. Do you live in this state?"

"Nay—or no, I *should* say. We are from Massachusetts."

"Have you friends in Saratoga whom you would like to have present?"



"...ay, we are strangers here," answered ... "We just came this morning." ... at Althea for the reward of his ... t her eyes were fixed upon the ...

... a hurry?" asked the minister, ...

... urry," Lorenzo asserted, and ..., sighing breath, as if to ... elf for further question.

The minister laughed a little. He was a tall, fair young man, with a light-coloured moustache cut short along his lip. "I'm sorry for the hurry. I don't think it's the best way to get married. But if you've made up your minds——"

"Yee — yes, we have," said Lorenzo boldly. "Haven't we, Althea?"

"Yee," Althea answered, more faintly.

"It a'n't any new thing or any sudden thing with us," said Lorenzo. "We've thought it over, and we've talked it over, and we've made up our minds fully. The only hurry that there's been about it was our comin' here, and that we *had* to do, to save feelin', as much as anything. We no *need* to do it."

Still Althea did not look at Lorenzo, but at a favourable change that passed over the minister's face she gave a little sigh of relief.

"Well, that's good," said the minister. "I can marry you, of course, and I will, if you wish. But the step you are going to take is the most important step you can take in your whole lives. I like to have people realise that, before I help them to take it, and reflect that it is irrevocable. But if you are attached to each other you will wish it to be so," he suggested, always smiling.

"Yee," said Lorenzo.

"That is the theory," continued the minister, and he looked at Althea, as if he felt that he could address a finer and higher intelligence in her. "But the strongest feeling is not always the surest guide. Would you like to go away for a little while, and ask yourselves and each other whether you are quite sure, and then come back?" He looked from one to the other kindly. Althea glanced at Lorenzo as if shaken. Lorenzo would not meet her eye.

"We've done that already. We know our minds now as well as we ever shall," he said, with a kind of doggedness.

"Very well," said the minister. "I thought I ought to suggest it. I must ask whether there is anything in the lives of either of you, or in your circumstances, which should cause you a conscientious scruple against entering the state of marriage."

"Nay," they answered together.

"I needn't ask if you have either of you been married before or are now married?"

"Oh nay," they answered, and Lorenzo permitted himself the relief of a laugh at the notion. Althea smiled in sympathy.

"And your name?"

"Lorenzo Weaver."

"The lady's?"

"Althea Brown."

The minister made a note of the names, and he said, "Is that driver a friend of yours?"

"Nay," said Lorenzo, "we don't know him."

The minister laughed as if he enjoyed the rogue's pretence of intimacy with them. "Well," he said, "I don't see why we shouldn't proceed. As you have no friends of your own to be present, I will just call my wife to witness the ceremony."

He went out again, and Althea murmured to Lorenzo in the twilight, "Oh, I hope she'll come soon!"

"I don't believe but what she will," he murmured back. He tried to take her hand to reassure her, but she kept it from him.

"Because if she don't," she scarcely more than gasped, "I don't believe I can bear it."

Lorenzo was silent, as if he did not know what to answer, and they sat mute together in the dim room till the minister came back.

"My wife will be in directly," he said, seating himself in the rocking-chair; "she has to make some change in her dress";

and now he spoke to Althea more especially. "With you ladies everything in life seems an occasion for that."

He smiled, and Althea smiled in mechanical response. "Yee," she said.

The minister looked at her, and after a momentary hesitation he said, "May I ask why you use that form of speech? I notice that you both use it."

Althea looked at Lorenzo, and he answered bluntly, "We are Shakers."

"Oh, indeed!" said the minister. "That is very interesting. I have never met any of your people before. You must excuse me if I say that I observed something peculiar in you at the first glance. But I supposed that the Shakers had a dress of their own."

"Yee, we have—in the Family," said Lorenzo; "but we got these things since we came into the world-outside."

The minister said "Oh!" and Althea blushed with a consciousness that imparted itself to the whole texture of her pretty dress, and to the cherry ribbons on her breast and hat. "But don't you use the plain language, and say thee and thou, like the Quakers?"

"Nay, we say Yee and Nay, 'for more than this cometh of evil.'"

A sort of sectarian self-satisfaction, a survival of conditions he had abandoned, expressed itself in Lorenzo's tone, and he was not apparently sensible of the irony in the minister's "Oh, I see!" But Althea stirred as if she felt it.

"We only say so now," she explained, "because we have the habit of it. We have no right to set ourselves above anybody else in the world-outside any more, as far as that goes."

"*Will* you excuse me?" said the minister, with a burst of frankness. "But if it isn't intrusive, I should like very much to know something about your Family life. You are communists, I believe?"

"Yee, we have all things common. There is not much to tell you. We all work and serve. I taught the school. Lorenzo was in the herb and seed shop; we put them up for sale."

"But your religious life — your social life?"

"We believe in the Bible, but we believe that Ann Lee came after Jesus to fulfil his mission. We think that revelation continues to this day, and that we are always in communion with the spirit world. The spirits give us our hymns and our music."

"I have heard something about it," said the minister, "and about your dancing at your meetings."

Lorenzo laughed with a little sectarian scorn. "That is about all that some folks in the world-outside think there is to it. That's what they come to see, generally. And it a'n't dancin', to call it rightly. It's more of a march."

"I should like to see it," said the minister. "But your distinctive social peculiarities besides your communism?"

Neither of the young people answered at once. At last Althea said, in a low voice, "We live the angelic life."

"What do you mean by that?"

She was silent, and looked at Lorenzo. He answered impatiently, "They don't get married; they think they are as the angels in heaven."

"Oh, indeed! Then——"

"That's the reason we left them. If there had been any other way——" Lorenzo hesitated, and Althea took the word.

"We never should have left the Family as long as we lived. They took us when we were little, and they have taken care of us, and taught us, and done everything for us. They loved us, and we loved them. But——"

She stopped in her turn, and Lorenzo resumed, "Well, the whole story is, we got to feelin' foolish about each other."

"Do you mean," and the minister suppressed a smile as he spoke, "that you fell in love?"

"Well, I presume you would call it that in the world-outside."

"I see," said the minister. "And as you could not be married there——"

"Yee."

They were all silent now till Althea asked in a trembling voice, "Do you think—it is wrong for us to—get married?"

The minister roused himself from the muse he was falling into. "Not the least in the world! Why should I think so?"

"We tried to look at it in every light, but sometimes I am afraid we were blinded by our feelings for each other. We didn't wish to be selfish about it, and it did seem as if our——"

"Being in love?" suggested the minister.

"Yee—was a kind of leading, and that we had as good a right to think that it was put into our hearts as any of the other things."

"That is the way the world-outside regards it," said the minister, with a smile

that betrayed his relish of the phrase he had adopted. "We even go so far as to say that matches are made in heaven. I must confess that some of them don't seem to bear out the theory."

"But you think—you think that there is nothing wrong in marriage itself, even if folks are not always happy in it?" Althea pursued.

"Most certainly," said the minister. "It's often very bad; but at its worst it's probably always the best thing under the circumstances." He seemed to speak in earnest, but he kept his smile on Althea, as if her quaint seriousness amused him in its relation to the worldly gaiety of her appearance. The spirit of a nun speaking from the fashions that Althea wore with as much grace as if she were born in them might well have appealed to a less imaginative sympathy. "Why do you ask? Were you taught that it was wrong in itself?"

"Nay—nay," she faltered.

"They're always talkin' against it," said Lorenzo bitterly. "They say themselves that it's all right in the earthly order; and yet they keep bragging up the gospel relation and the angelic life, and tellin' you that

Christ never got married; and I think it's *wore* on her. I tried to convince her the best I could that Christ wouldn't have gone to weddin's if he hadn't approved of 'em, for all he didn't marry."

"Do you think he did approve of them?" she entreated, tremulously, of the minister.

"I think he did, indeed."

"But if—— Don't his not marrying make it appear as if he thought it was of the earthly order?"

"There it is again!" cried Lorenzo. "She can't seem to get past that. I tell her—and I don't know how many times I've told her—that we can't all expect to lead the angelic life in this world."

"We can if we choose," she retorted nervously, speaking to Lorenzo, but still intent upon the minister's face.

"I don't believe," he said, "that we ought to study a literal conformity to the life of Jesus in everything; that is, we should not make his practice in such a matter an article of faith. I should say that if any one felt strongly appealed to by it, he would do well to follow it; but if he did not, he would not do well to follow it; and especially would not do well to enforce it upon others."

"There! Didn't I say so?" demanded Lorenzo of Althea. "Let everybody do accordin' to his own conscience."

"As long," said the minister, "as Christ's words do not explicitly condemn marriage——"

The voice of Althea broke in upon him, still tremulous but clear, and gaining firmness to the close: "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

The minister listened with a smile, as if her child-like fanaticism interested him like something of rare and peculiar quality, but he replied, with a certain touch of compassionate respect, "Is that the passage they ground their doctrine on? You know those are Luke's words, and Luke had his facts at second-hand. The other gospels do not report the words of Jesus so; but even if Luke's report were the most accurate, as it's certainly the fullest, I should not take

it literally. I have thought a good deal about that passage," said the minister, "for I have to do a good deal of marrying and giving in marriage, and I read in it a deeper meaning than the face of the words bear. In a certain sense, marriage is both the death and the resurrection. If you will think about it, you will see that it is the very symbol of eternity in human life. All other human relations dissolve and end, but that endures imperishably. The family continually perishes through marriage, which creates it. Children are born to a wedded pair, and there is a family; they grow up and marry, and the family which they constituted ceases to be, as the family which their children shall constitute will cease to be. But the marriage of the father and mother remains to all eternity. If there is no giving in marriage beyond this life it is not in condemnation of marriage, but in recognition of the fact that it is *from* everlasting as well as *to* everlasting, like all things eternal."

"There, Althea," murmured Lorenzo; but the girl did not speak.

The minister went on: "The husband and the wife lay down their separate lives, and take up a joint life, which, if they are truly

married, shall be theirs for ever. There is no marrying after death, but heaven is imaged in every true marriage on earth; for heaven is nothing but the joy of self-giving, and marriage is the supreme self-giving. We call the *ceremony* 'getting married,'" he pursued, expanding with a certain pleasure in his theme, which was not, perhaps, very relevant to it; "but the living together, the adjustment of temperaments, the compromise of opinions, the reconciliation of tastes, is what we *should* call 'getting married.' I should wish you to remember that *marriage is the giving up of self.* That is its highest meaning. If it is not that, it is something so low as to be the unworthiest of all human relations. If you do not give up yourselves, if you insist upon what you think your rights against one another, you will be yokemates of perdition, and your marriage will be a hell. I suppose it is the dread of something like this in marriage that has created the celibate sects in all times and in all religions. But marriage is properly the death of the individual, and in its resurrection you will rise not as man and woman, but as one pair, in the unity of immortal love. I declare," he broke off, "I don't know what's keeping my wife.

I'm detaining you an unconscionable time. If you'll excuse me, I'll just go——" He started from his chair, and made a movement towards the door.

Althea sprang to her feet, and put out her hand. "Nay!" she said nervously, "don't call her yet. Lorenzo—I—— Don't you believe we'd better take a little time to think—and come back? You could let us come back?" she entreated of the minister.

"Why, surely! Again and again, as often as you wish. Go and think it over; and if you still have any misgiving——"

"We haven't any misgivings," said Lorenzo stoutly. "But if she wants to get her mind clear, I won't be the one to hinder or hurry her."

"That is the right spirit," said the minister, and he offered the young fellow his hand. "I shall be here till twelve o'clock—it's eleven now—and after that not till between four and five. I shall be glad to see you back, but if you don't come—Good morning!" He smiled cordially upon them at the lattice door, where he parted from them, and held it open for them to pass out.

VIII.

THEY blinked in the strong sunshine, and walked dizzily down the bit of brick pavement to the gate, and then down the quiet street.

"I don't know what you'll say to me, Lorenzo," Althea began.

Without looking round at her he answered, "You done right, Althea."

"Oh, do you think so?" she quavered. "I did for the best; I thought we ought to talk it over more, and look into our minds and ask ourselves—— I'm not sure that I see all these things in the light he did."

"Seemed to me he gave us a pretty solemn talk," said Lorenzo—"more than he'd any need to. Well, he said as much himself; I a'n't criticisin' him. I thought we had our minds made up. But I could see how he unsettled you by some of the things he said, and if you don't think he made it out so very clear, after all, I want you should feel just right about it every

way, Althea. We can come back this afternoon."

"Lorenzo, if you say so, we will go back now—this minute!" she cried passionately. "I didn't draw back on my account any more than yours."

"Nay, we'll wait now awhile—or, any rate, till we see it in the right light. But I'll tell you what, Althea: I think we've thought enough about it, and more than enough. What we want to do now is to think of something else, and let our marryin' alone awhile. It's like this, the way I view it: it's like a sum that you can't do or work out anyhow; and you can beat yourself against it all day, and you can't do it. But let it alone a spell, and come back after your mind's rested, and you'll find it's done itself."

"I do believe it's so, Lorenzo," said Althea, with a potential joy in her tone.

"Yee. And, Althea, *I* say, let's forget all about it, and go round and enjoy ourselves. It's about as fine a day as I ever saw, and it a'n't likely we shall be back in Saratoga very soon again. There's no use makin' a poor mouth, and I don't see as there's any reason. You was feelin' well enough before we went in there, and I guess

nothing 's really happened to make us down-hearted."

He leaned over from his loftier height with a smile, and his shoulder touched hers. At the contact her hand glided out upon his arm, as if without her will, and rested there. She did not answer, but in a moment she halted him with a little pull. "Where are we going?"

He looked round and laughed. "Well, well! I declare if I thought. I guess we came down the street because it was easier than to go up."

"I hope that isn't going to be the way with us through life!" she said, and she looked round with a laughing face.

A young man driving a pair of light sorrels in a wood-coloured surrey drew up in the middle of the road, and held his whip towards them. "Carriage?" he called out.

"Nay, we don't want to ride," Lorenzo began.

"Well then," said the driver, and he guided his team closer to them on the corner where they stood, "I guess I shall have to get that dollar from you." He smiled benignly at the bewildered look Lorenzo gave him, and then laughed at his dawning consciousness.

"Well, well! I forgot all about it!" Lorenzo put his hand in his pocket, while Althea drew her hand from his arm; he took out the note and handed it to the driver.

"Dominie made it all right for you, then?"

Lorenzo tried to withdraw with dignity from the confidential ground taken with him. "I guess so," he said, with dry evasion.

"Well, I thought so," the driver exulted, "when you come out; and when I see her take your arm, I knowed there wasn't a doubt about it. Say, why don't you get in and let me take you to your hotel? It sha'n't cost you a cent. You wan't to pull up at the Grand Union in style, if that's where you 're goin'."

Althea shrank in dismay from these preternatural intuitions, but it seemed to Lorenzo, though he felt her reluctance, that it would be better to accept the offer, and get rid of the fellow at the hotel door. He was afraid that otherwise he might follow them the whole way, and perhaps give a mortifying publicity to their adventure by trying to talk with them about it from the middle of the street. Besides, he did not know where the Grand Union was, and it seemed settled that they were to go there.

"I guess we better, Althea," he suggested.

"Well, if you say so, Lorenzo."

"Well, that's right! Get right in,' said the driver. When they were seated and he turned about to arrange the linen lap-cloth over their knees, he laughed, for Althea's pleasure, and said, "'Now you're married, you must obey, and mind your husband night and day,' as the song says. Well, that's the way it works for a while, anyhow. Then it's the husband's turn, and *he* takes a hack at obeyin'. Well, it's all in a lifetime, as I tell my wife. Didn't think I was married? How did you suppose I was on to you so quick? Been there myself. Got the nicest little wife in *this* town. But I guess I should ha' known what you was after, anyway. Lots of couples come to Saratoga to get married in a hurry. It's all right! Did the Dominie ask you some hard questions? He does oftentimes, and if he can't feel just right about it, he won't splice you. I've had to take more than one couple to another shop. But he's all right, the Dominie is! Tell him what you was?"

"We no need to feel ashamed of anything," said Lorenzo resentfully.

"Well, that's so. That's what the dominie likes. I could tell you some pretty

tough stories about the couples I 've had to hunt round for a minister with."

Lorenzo wished to say something that would put a stop to the fellow's talk, but Althea pressed his arm as a sign for him not to answer, and he forbore.

The driver seemed to interpret their silence aright. "Well," he said, "it's a pleasure to strike the right sort of couple, and I guess that 's what the dominie thought too. He 's all right. Didn't I tell you he was a white man? Well, he *is*." Though his words ran so freely, the driver suffered from a poverty of ideas which now seemed to make itself apparent even to himself, and he fell silent before they reached the hotel. "Here we are," he said, when he pulled up in front of it at last.

Lorenzo and Althea sat staring at the great hostelry's façade, with the upward sweep of its portico in front of them, the wide stretch of its verandahs southward, and northward the glitter of the shops and offices under it. Men were going and coming up and down the steps of the portico, and they thronged the office within, and stretched in groups along the verandahs, with their feet on the railing; they were smoking and talking together. Here and there one

sat alone, with his cigar sloped upward and his hat-brim sloped downward almost to the point of meeting.

There were very few women to be seen, and Lorenzo hesitated, with a glance at Althea. The driver tried to encourage him.

"You want to go right through the inside piazza, and get the rest of the concert; it a'n't over yet. And you can register just as well afterwards; you won't have any trouble about rooms so early in the season." They dismounted anxiously, and stood looking up into the hotel. "There!" said the driver. "I guess *they're* goin' in. You just follow them, and you'll be all right." He pointed at a group of ladies who were mounting the steps, and then drove away. The ladies pushed fearlessly into the hotel, and Althea followed with Lorenzo. The place was full of men talking and smoking, like those outside, and she missed the shelter of the deep Shaker bonnet where she could have hid her face from the glances that seemed to seek it from all sides. She knew that her cropped hair must look strange under her gay hat, and she wanted to ask Lorenzo whether it looked so *very* strange; but he was intent upon finding a way between the groups and keeping those ladies in sight. The noise of

shuffling feet and rippling dresses confused her, and the vastness of the place awed her; through a doorway on one hand she caught a glimpse of a long room with splendours of upholstery and furnishing, under shining chandeliers and deep mirrors; and then suddenly they reached a wide open doorway, and at the same moment there burst through upon them a joyous tide of music that seemed to Althea almost to sweep her from her feet, and made her cling closer to Lorenzo.

On either side of the doorway beautifully dressed women sat listening, or whispered with the haughty-looking men beside them, and before her tall, slim pines shot up from the levels of a wide lawn, and a fountain, set round with broad-leaved plants, gushed into the sunshine that their boughs sifted upon it. On the pathways that intersected each other under the trees nearer and farther pairs of young men and women strayed together to the limits of the high, many-windowed walls that enclosed the landscape.

"Lorenzo, Lorenzo!" she murmured, as they found places among the company that they seemed to be an accepted part of, "do you believe that we're awake?"

"Yee, I guess we are at last, Althea. Do

you like it?" he whispered back, with a lover's pleasure in her pleasure; he involuntarily took credit for it as if he had created it.

"I feel as if I had just come to life," she whispered. "Oh, how could it all have been, and we not know it!"

"I guess," he exulted, "there are a good many things in the world-outside that are never heard of in the Family. Do you feel *now* as if it was wrong?"

She saw the same look in his eyes that she knew he saw in hers. "Nay, that's all gone. I shall never think so any more."

Her hand found his at their side, and they sat with their fingers knitted together in the shelter of her drapery that flowed over them. The music that thrilled from the viols and violins, and breathed cool and piercing from the flutes and flageolets, seemed to claim Althea for the earth, and to fill her heart with a bliss of living. It liberated her from the fear that had been lurking in the bottom of her heart. It silenced that dull nether ache of doubt; it flattered and promised; it lured her out of the prison of herself, and invited her to be of its own ecstasy.

IX.

WHEN the piece ended a sweet, high pipe of a voice behind them said, "Won't you have a programme?" and Althea was aware of a little white hand dangling a printed leaf at her shoulder. She looked round and confronted a young girl, with bright, joyful eyes, and a smile of radiant happiness on her lips; she was very fair, with hair of pale yellow, which loosed itself from the mass in rings and tendrils at her temples and about her neck, and sunnily misted her uncovered head. She wore a light-blue dress, and in her lap lay a hat of yellow straw, with blue cornflowers knotted among its ribbons. "Mamma has one," she explained to Althea's look of question and reluctance, "and we don't need them both"; and she glanced at the elder lady in black beside her, who nodded a silent assent.

Althea took the programme provisionally, with some halting thanks, and the girl showed, with a deeply jewelled finger, where the musicians had got in it. She

included Lorenzo, who was looking round at her, too, in the same hospitable smile. At the end of the next piece Althea offered to restore the programme, but she made her keep it, and she began to talk to her. She asked her if she did not think the music was too lovely for anything, and whether she had heard the music at the other hotels. She contended that it did not sound half so well there, and that it was everything to hear it in such a beautiful place. She asked Althea if she ever saw such a beautiful place, and she said that she did not believe that there was such a beautiful place anywhere. She made her look at the fountain, and while Althea was looking at it she knew the girl was looking at her hat and her dress.

At the end of the second piece she seemed to have gone much further with Althea in her mind. She leaned forward to ask, "Don't you just *love* Saratoga? We've been here a week, and I don't believe we can ever get enough of it. You won't mind my talking to you, will you, without being introduced? When you came through the door I said to mamma, 'Well, there's *one* person that I have simply *got* to know; and when you came and sat down right in front of us, it did seem too much! Of course it must

seem very unceremonious, and I shouldn't do so to every one. Do you mind?"

Althea contrived to get in that she did not between this question and the next, but the girl seemed not to care much for her answers. "Have you ever been in Saratoga before? I think everything is so romantic here, and *perfect*. We didn't expect to stay so long, but"—she put on a sudden state as she said so—"we've been detained by business. My husband had to go back to New York on business. He's with Stroud & Malkim there." She looked at Althea as if for an effect of the firm's name upon her, and added, "Curtains, you know. We did intend to go up to Lake George and Lake Champlain and to Montreal, but I shouldn't care if we spent every bit of the time in Saratoga. Are you staying in this hotel?"

Althea looked at Lorenzo. "Yee—es. We are going to as soon as——"

The music began again; it was the last piece, and when it ended most of the people about them rose and dispersed; but certain of them waited till they could get away without being crowded, and her new friend leaned forward to advise Althea to wait till the jam was over.

Lorenzo said, "I guess you better, Althea,

and I might as well go and register. I won't be gone but a little while, and if you 'll stay right here I can easily find you again."

"Just as you say, Lorenzo," said Althea, but she looked up at him a little wistfully.

"Oh, we 'll chaperon her!" cried their new friend gaily! and as soon as Lorenzo left his chair she laid her hat upon her own, and slipped into the place next Althea. "Now you needn't tell me if you don't want to, but I just *know* you 're on your wedding journey! When you first came in, arm in arm, I told mamma I *bet* you were." She curled her lip in over her teeth, and questioned Althea with her gay eyes; then she flashed out: "You *are*, I know it! Oh, I *wish* George was here! George—that 's *my* husband, and he 's the *nicest* fellow! Well, I *wish* you could see him; he 'll be here to-night, too. I should like our husbands to get acquainted. I think yours is awfully nice-looking; he ought to have a moustache; he would look splendid in a moustache. I tell George *his* moustache is too big for anything. There he is!" She pulled a little watch from her belt, and sprung it open; on the inside of the case was the head of a young man, which filled it so full that the ends of his moustache extended invisibly into

space beyond it. "Don't you think he's good-looking?"

"Yee, I do," said Althea; but she did not think him so good-looking as Lorenzo.

The young wife did not wait for an answer; she pressed the pictured face to her lips, snapped the case to, and tucked the watch back in her belt. "It's taken right on the case; they do that now, and it's so much nicer than pasting the photograph. George gave it to me before we were married. Well, he had to hurry up; we didn't have a very long courtship. We got acquainted on the cars, and he said that the minute he set eyes on me he knew I was the girl he was going to marry. It was a perfect novel, from beginning to end; and I don't care what they say, but I know that the course of true love *does* run smooth, sometimes. It didn't have a single hitch with us; but I *didn't* suppose we should be separated this way, right in the first week of our honeymoon. George says it's good practice, though; he's got to be on the road so much; and I've got to be left with mamma, and I might as well begin early; I've almost talked her to death about him already." She seemed to be reminded to look round for her mother; the older woman had made her escape for the moment.

"Oh, there she is, by the fountain. She's just as fond of George as I am, and she's going to live with us when we get our flat in New York; we're going to board awhile first. Is your husband travelling?" She had to explain that her own husband went about over the country getting orders for the house of Stroud and Malkim, and she apparently forgot what she asked, for she followed her question up with another, not waiting for an answer. "Have you been to any of the stores in Saratoga yet? They have lovely things, and *so* cheap." She looked hard at Althea's costume.

"I got this dress and hat here this morning," Althea said.

The other clapped her hands. "I just *told* mamma you did! Did you get them at that place under the hotel, a little way up?"

"I guess so," Althea assented. "I didn't notice exactly."

"Well, if I ever knew anything like it! I do believe it's the very dress George and I looked at yesterday, and I *know* I saw that hat in the window. They're real imported, the woman said, and they're *dreams*, both of them. George would have got them for me if they'd been my style. They're killing on you."

X.

LORENZO found himself before the g hotel register, which one of the cl had wheeled round towards him. Whe had fancied inscribing himself and Althe Lorenzo Weaver and Wife, it had been simple; but it suddenly came to him they were not married, and that he could truthfully call her his wife. He stood l ing over the register, and he was aware of clerk waiting impatiently. He had said he wished to register, and he was not doin

The clerk said severely, and, Lorenzo disdainfully, "Let this gentleman regi please," and then he was aware of some standing behind him. A large, flourish sort-of-looking man, with a shawl on his and a bag in his hand, which he put d when Lorenzo moved aside, wrote with pen which the clerk dipped into the ink offered him, "J. M. Bayne and Lady, a rapid authoritative hand, and the c said, "Room, Mr. Bayne?" And the

answered, "No; dinner. We're going on to Lake George in the afternoon. Like to check these things." And the clerk answered, "Opposite desk, please." And a black call-boy ran up and took the shawl and bag, and the man went away, and left Lorenzo to the register again. The man had solved the problem for him, and he wrote, "Lorenzo Weaver and Lady." If Althea was not his wife, she was certainly, in the parlance of the world-outside, a lady, and this seemed a safe way out of the trouble.

"Dinner?" asked the clerk, who came back to him when he looked up from the register.

"Nay—no, I guess I will have a room. But we do want dinner," said Lorenzo. At the word he was sensible of being hungry.

The clerk wrote a number and an initial against Lorenzo's name, and then he asked, "Baggage?"

"What?" said Lorenzo.

"Any trunks or traps to go to your room?"

"Oh, they haven't come yet. We left our things at the stores till we could make up our minds which hotel——"

"Ten dollars," said the clerk abruptly. Lorenzo did not know why he said this, but he stood waiting behind the register, and it

came to Lorenzo that he was asking ten dollars of him, and he took out his money and paid it rather tentatively. The clerk took the money, and said, as he laid it in a drawer, "We have to get it in advance where there's no baggage. Like to go to your room?"

"I guess we'll have some dinner first," said Lorenzo. He had decided that he would not try to answer yes or no to anything, for fear he should say yee or nay, and he found it easy to begin always with a guess.

"Early dinner from one to three," said the clerk. "Go in any time you like." He did not seem so unkind now as at first; he even smiled a little in looking at Lorenzo, as if now he had fathomed his hesitation in registering, and imagined him to have had the newly married man's embarrassment in declaring his condition so publicly for the first time. He even added, "Dining-room right through the parlour," and then he turned finally away.

Lorenzo went back to the place where he had left Althea. She was not there, and his heart gave a leap of alarm. He looked all round, whirling about, and searching the long verandahs with eyes which he could not keep from being anxious.

Far off, almost at the end of the grove, two

ladies—one in white and one in blue—were walking. At the moment he caught sight of them they stopped, and the one in blue began to wave her handkerchief as if she were signalling to him. Then he saw that it was Althea with that young woman who had taken his place beside her; it was she who was waving to him. She had Althea by the arm, and was leaning forward, as if talking rapidly up into her face. He went out to meet them, advancing shyly; and as soon as he came within hearing the young woman screamed at him, "Were you *scared*? Did you think some one had run away with her?"

Lorenzo was ashamed to own that he had been frightened. He said, "I guess so"; and that seemed to pass for a joke with the young woman, who bowed herself forward, and then threw herself backward in the fit of laughter that seized her at his words. She walked mincingly, and she hung her disengaged hand at her side with her handkerchief always in it, which she now pressed to her eyes, as if to wipe away her tears of laughter. She realised to Lorenzo all that he had ever dreamed of fashionable splendour in the world-outside. Her dress was beautiful, and so was her hat, which she wore at a saucy slant on her little golden head.

Althea blushed as they approached, but she merely said, "We thought you would see us; but we were coming back anyway."

"Oh, this is the best joke!" the young lady cried, beginning to laugh again. "I shall tell George about this the very first thing when I see him. I guess *he* wouldn't have been scared. He knows I couldn't be *induced* to run away from him. We did give you a scare, didn't we? Poor Mr. Brown!"

Lorenzo stared and said, "My name is Weaver."

"Why, your wife said it was Brown," the young lady began, in a tone of injury. Then she burst out laughing again. "Oh, I see!" She turned to Althea. "You forgot you were married, and you told me your maiden name. Oh, that is *too* good! When I tell George about this! But it isn't the least bit surprising. I've been married nearly a whole week, and I believe if I didn't keep saying my married name over to myself all the time, I shouldn't realise yet that I was married. But the only way is to keep saying it; and I write it too: Mrs. George Cargate, Mrs. George Cargate. If you don't do it, you'll get into all sorts of scrapes. Well, Mr. Weaver, I

am going to be awfully good now, and leave you to yourselves; I can see that you're just dying to be together." She drew her arm out of Althea's, and then seized her by both wrists. "Oh, you are just too sweet for anything! That cherry red does become you so, and it's just the same shade here, and here, and here!" She touched the knot on Althea's hat, the knot on her breast, and the dimple on her cheek; and then, with a cry of laughter, she broke from them and ran down the path to the hotel.

Lorenzo and Althea stood abashed in each other's presence. "Well, well!" he said, at last.

"I presume we do not understand their ways yet," said Althea. "She seems to mean well; but she seems to let herself go a good deal, even for the world-outside."

"Oh yes," Lorenzo assented; "I presume she don't mean any harm by it. I'd rather see a person more settled."

They were walking demurely side by side towards the hotel, and she cast an upward, sidewise look at him. "You wouldn't like to have me start off now with a little scream and run after her, yonder?"

"Nay," said Lorenzo soberly, "I should *not*, Althea." Something ascetic showed in

his kind young face; the potentiality of Shaker eldership passed like a cloud-shadow over it. "I don't like such behaving. Did you tell her—did you make her understand—that we were not married yet?"

"Nay, there was no time for *that*," answered Althea; "I had to let her go on talking to me, as if we were."

"Yee," said Lorenzo.

"We had to let that driver think so too," she pursued.

"Oh yee," said Lorenzo, with a sigh; and he thought how he had let the hotel people think so by the entry he had made; but he did not tell Althea of that. "I presume," he said, with another deep breath, "that it is not deceiving unless we mean to deceive. It will be all right as soon as we *are* married."

"We promised not to talk of that yet," said Althea.

"Yee. Not till *you* say so. I guess it's about dinner-time now."

"Oh, well, then, let us go right in. I am hungry. It is a long time since we had breakfast."

XI.

AT the door of the dining-room, where Lorenzo gave his hat to a man who was taking hats and putting them on long shelves, they stopped.

"My short hair will show," Althea whispered, with her hands up to the elastic that held her hat on. "Shall you mind if it makes them look."

"Oh nay, not if *you* don't," and he flushed a little, thinking how pretty she was, with her hands up so.

"I presume they will think it is queer. I don't know exactly what to do, Lorenzo."

They stood staring into the vast dining-room in a hesitation that grew painful. Rows of small tables stretched away in long perspective, with one wide avenue dividing them, and aisles penetrating their multitude crosswise and lengthwise. The china and glass and silver glittered, the napery shone, and the black waiters in white linen jackets ran to and fro seating and serving the guests,

who were there already in great number. They kept pressing in around Lorenzo and Althea where they stood. An old grey-headed negro received them with severe state as they entered, and waved his hand to one of his subordinates, who beckoned to the guests and ran down the dining-hall before them to some table where he pulled out chairs for them to be seated.

"Well, well!" said Lorenzo, in vague response to Althea's perplexity; and he turned about without hope of help, but merely to gain time, when his eyes met the gay eyes of that young woman coming forward with her silent mother.

"Oh, are you going to have early dinner, too?" she called to him, and her voice made Althea turn round. "*We* are, just to pass away the time; we have got to do something till George comes. I've just got a despatch from him—he telegraphs twice a day—and only think! he won't be here till to-morrow morning. Isn't it a shame? I don't know what I'm going to do to live through it. Why don't you go in?" she asked Althea, as she put her hand through her arm. "We can go in together, I suppose; but there are no seats at our table and they'll be sure to put you somewher

else, they're so obstinate. What are you waiting for?" She seemed to note something unusual now in their delay, and she addressed her question to Lorenzo.

"It's her short hair," he began; and in spite of Althea's "O Lorenzo!" he went on, "It'll show so when she takes her hat off."

"Well, don't take it off, then!" cried the young woman. "Half of them are going in with their hats and bonnets on, don't you see?"

"Yee-es," said Lorenzo. "But we didn't know——"

"I guess you can do what other people do. Why did you cut it off? Was it sickness? I had a fever once, when I was little, and I had to have my head *shaved*. George says he wishes he could have seen me." She was pressing into the room with her hand in Althea's arm, and the stately negro stopped them with a bow that made her drop her hand. "There! I suppose they'll put you off somewhere by yourselves. I think everything is too provoking to-day! But I'll see you just as soon as we're through dinner." She went gaily off with her mother, and an airy waiter went down, and in and out of the tables, in a series of dancing positions, till he had led Lorenzo

and Althea almost the whole length of the hall, and pulled out two chairs for them where they were to sit, and snapped his fingers to another waiter, who came forward to wait upon them. They were red with shame and fear, but under his friendly smile they began to feel more at their ease. They did not know what to ask for, and they let him choose their dinner, which he brought in splendid profusion, and put before them with affectionate hospitality, which, after he had served their dessert, began to suffer a chill eclipse. He went and stood gloomily against the wall with folded arms.

"I can't think what it is comes over them all, Althea," said Lorenzo. "I believe I shall ask that young woman when we get back to the parlour and have a chance to speak to her."

He had not to wait so long. The young woman made her way to them from her distant table before they rose from theirs, and took a vacant seat beside Althea. When Lorenzo told how strangely the sleeping-car porter and the restaurant waiter and now this waiter had behaved towards the end, she laughed, and said, "Why, it must be the tip. Did you give them something."

"What for?"

"For waiting on you."

"I thought they were paid for that."

"Well, they are. But they always expect something extra, George says."

"Well, well!" said Lorenzo. "How much had I ought to give?"

"Well, George says—of course, I don't know anything about it myself—*George* says he always gives them five dollars to begin with, and that makes them pleasant; but if they don't look after him well after that he don't give them anything more."

Lorenzo took out his money, which he had all in one roll of bills, and peeled off a five-dollar note, which he held out towards the waiter. The waiter rushed upon it. When he recognised its value he burst into a joyous effervescence of thanks; he begged them to let him bring them something else, and overwhelmed them with finger-bowls and superfluous service; he went down on his knees under the table, to see if they had not dropped something; he said that he should be sure to keep those seats for them as long as they stayed; and he said he would speak to the head-waiter, so that they should not be shown elsewhere.

"Yes, I guess that was it," said the young woman, when they had got away from him,

and were walking up the wide avenue towards the door together. She had her hand through Althea's arm again, and she talked to Lorenzo over her pretty shoulder, which she drew a little forward as she moved. "I guess you've fixed him. And now, Mr. Weaver, I'm going to ask a great favour of you. I want you to lend me your wife a little while. I want her to go shopping with me for an hour or so. I can't think of any other way to put in the time, and if I don't do something I shall simply go stark, staring, raving mad without George here. The stores in Saratoga are awfully nice, and I've seen a lot of things that I want to get, and I know Mrs. Weaver has seen things too that she wants."

"N-no," Althea began. "I have got everything. I don't want——"

"Now that is all nonsense," said the young woman. "You tell her it is, Mr. Weaver! I know she's dying to get something; and you give her a lot of money, won't you? It's your wedding journey, you know, and of course you expect to waste a little, and then economise after you settle down. That's what George says."

"Why, Althea, there may be something you need," Lorenzo suggested.

"Now I ain't going to have it that way!"

the young woman pouted. "She's going to get what she *wants*, whether she *needs* it or not. That's the way I tell George I'm going to do, and I shall make the money fly, and he had better look out to get plenty of it. It drives mamma almost crazy to hear me talk, and she always takes his part against me."

"Do you want I should go, Lorenzo?" asked Althea; but there was a latent light in her eye, that pleaded when her words would not.

"Why, yee," said Lorenzo.

"Is that your pet way of saying yes?" asked the young woman. "I think it's awfully nice to have those pet words just between yourselves. George and I, we say *yep*, and *nop*, just for fun, you know, like children. Well, now, give her the money, Mr. Weaver, and we'll be back in the parlour about four o'clock, for I'm going to make an afternoon of it, and we're not going to have you round. You can go off and sit in the park—Congress Park, right over there—and listen to the music, or you can go off shopping for yourself if you want to. Mrs. Weaver, I want you to come up to my room while I get my walking-dress on, and I want you to see my trousseau.

There's one imported dress—present fr George—that is the *dreamiest* thing! E by!" She waved her hand over her coqu tishly shrugged shoulder, and without loc ing at Lorenzo again she pulled Alth away with her.

XII.

LORENZO sat in the park till he was tired; then he went about to the different shops where they had left things, and carried them to the hotel himself. He had to wait half an hour in the hotel parlour before Althea and the young woman came in. The young woman said she was dead tired, and she knew they were just dying to be together, and she ran off and left them.

"Lorenzo," said Althea, "can I go over and sit in that place where you have been staying? I want to talk with you. Can we talk there?"

"Why, yee. It's a very quiet place now; the people nearly all went away when the band stopped."

At the gate of the park Lorenzo stopped and bought admission tickets from the man at the window.

"Why, do you have to *pay* to go in?" demanded Althea.

"I found out I did when I tried to go in

without," said Lorenzo. "You have to pay for pretty much everything in the world-outside."

"Oh, the world-outside, the world-outside!" cried the girl.

They walked along without speaking till they came to a seat where a recession in the high shaded bank made a special seclusion. They sat down, and Althea took from the belt of her dress a little roll of bank-notes and handed it to Lorenzo. "There is your money, Lorenzo—what is left of it. I spent some. I don't know how much. I am not used to counting it."

Lorenzo put the money in his pocket without looking at it. "Nay, we 're neither of us much used to that, Althea. Did you get what you wanted?"

"I got what she said I ought to get; I got a travelling-dress! I told them to send the things to the hotel."

"Yee. And I went round to the places where we left our things this morning and got them."

"I had forgotten about those things," said Althea dreamily. Lorenzo laughed vaguely, and she turned abruptly upon him, with a start from her absence. "Do you know what time it is, Lorenzo?"

"It *has* been rather of a long day, Althea, and I guess you must have felt it so too. It seems to me, we 've been about so, that it was back in the last century some time when we got out the cars this morning." He pulled his watch out, a large silver one, and he said, with an air of pride, as her eye fell upon it, "Friend Nason thought I better get it, seeing I never had one before, and he went with me to the jeweller's. It 's a Swiss one, and it cost twelve dollars; he said it was full as good as an American one that would have cost me twenty." She seemed not to notice it, and he added, with a little disappointment, "It 's half-past four." She did not say anything. He closed the case of his watch with a snap, and put it back in his pocket. "I was just thinkin'," he went on, in a smiling muse, "how this light lays along the slope of the upper pasture at the Family. Strikes over the top of the hill and slants along down; and it gets to be evening there, I guess, as much as an hour before it does in the lower pasture and the garden." He closed his eyes to a fine line. "I can see how it looks as plain as if I was there now. Rufus is comin' up the cow-path to look after the cows and drive 'em down to the barn; and I can see Elder Thomas

there, waitin' with the boys to see 'em milk, and show 'em. It 's just about the time your school lets out, and you 're walkin' over to the Church Family house, and the children—— Well, it 's kind of peaceful there! And it 's sightly. It 's full as sightly here, I guess, and now the band 's stopped it 's peaceful too." The delicious breeze that had been freshening ever since morning was at its sweetest now; it sang through the tops of the tall, slim oaks of the park, and sighed in the clump of pines where they were sitting. Lorenzo paused, as if he hoped for some sympathetic response from Althea, and then he said, "But I like that upper pasture. I guess the thrushes are beginning to tune up about now in the wood-lot there. I sha'n't forget how you used to look comin' up by the wall, kind of bendin' forward, and lookin' for wild strawberries, with the little girls in the afternoons, a little later on——"

She broke in upon him with a sudden harshness: "Lorenzo, what was it made you feel foolish about me in the first place?"

Lorenzo kept the smile that was left from his muse, though Althea had spoken so strangely. "I don't know as I can remember the beginning exactly."

"Yee, you can, Lorenzo! There must

have been a time when you began to feel foolish. Think!"

"Why, I told you, Althea. It was one day when I saw you in the march at meetin', and the way you stepped off, and the way you turned at the corners, and the way you carried your head. I always used to watch you; but that day I seemed to be following you round, as if I was drawed by a rope, and I couldn't get away if I tried."

"Was that what made you foolish about me?"

"It wasn't all. I don't know as I ought to tell you, Althea, but I thought you had beautiful eyes, and there was something about your mouth when you spoke or smiled, and your voice—there was something about that, when I picked it out in the singing, that seemed to go *through* me. I can't express it exactly."

"Was that all?"

"Well, I don't know as you want me to speak of it——"

"Yee, yee!" she besought him passionately. "Tell me everything, speak of everything!"

"I thought—I thought you had a nice figure, Althea; I told you that last night. Your dress was the same as the rest, but it

didn't look the same on you. It was sightlier, and—graceful. There, I don't feel anyways sure it 's right to speak of such things, but you wanted I should."

"Yee, I wanted you should. And now I am going to tell you what made me feel foolish about you. It was because you were so tall and strong-looking, and you had pretty eyelashes, and your hair had such a wave in it when it was long; and your mouth curved so at the corners, and you had such a deep voice. And you were so handsome; and once when we all went berrying, and I hurt my foot, and you lifted me over the wall——"

"I remember," said Lorenzo, joyfully, shyly.

"I didn't want you to put me down. Do you despise me for it?"

"Althea!"

"You were afraid I despised you for thinking I had a pretty figure." Lorenzo was silent, as if he did not know what to say.

"We 've been over this before, Althea," he spoke, at last.

She did not heed what he said, apparently. "That young woman, that Mrs. Cargate, has been telling me all about her love affairs,

as she calls them. She was engaged three times before she got married. She says she has been in love with lots of men."

"Well, well!" said Lorenzo.

"And she has got their pictures, and they have got hers. She asked me if I had been engaged before. She says it's nothing to be engaged. She says that her husband says he first felt foolish about her when he saw her through the car window eating candy and carrying on, as she calls it, with some other girls; and it was her regular teeth, and red lips while she was eating, that made him feel so."

"It's kind of—sickish," said Lorenzo.

"He came into the car, and he made an excuse to sit down by her when the other girls left, and she let him have a chance to squeeze her hand—he didn't know that she let him——"

"Don't, Althea!"

"And before she got out they were as good as engaged; she was dead in love with him, she says, from the first look, and he sent her his picture as soon as he got to New York."

"Well, well!"

"Her mother was opposed to her getting engaged again because she thought it was

just another flirtation, and she had got sick of having her engaged so much. She told me just why she fell in love with each one, and what each one said he fell in love with her for."

"It don't seem exactly right," said Lorenzo. "She must have made you about sick with her talk."

"Her mother didn't like him when he first called—they promised to correspond before she got off the cars, and she told him where she lived—but she took to her bed, and her mother had to consent. Now her mother likes him as much as she does. They 're the greate friends, and when he found that he would have to go back to New York from here he kept it a secret from her, and telegraphed for her mother to come up and stay with her, and she never knew anything about it till her mother came into the room."

"Well, it seems to have come all right, then," said Lorenzo, with a vague optimism; but he moved uneasily under Althea's eye, and his smile faded.

"From all that I can make out," she said, "they fell in love with each other for the same things, or just about the same, as we got foolish about each other for. He

thought she was handsome, and she thought he was handsome. Lorenzo, they fell in love with each other's *looks*!"

Lorenzo waited a moment before he said, with a certain reproach, "I thought you was smart too, Althea—smarter than I was."

"And I knew you were good, Lorenzo. But it didn't begin with that."

"Nay, it didn't begin with that," he owned.

"If it had begun with that," she went on, "I shouldn't ever have doubted about it for a second. It 's the way it began that makes me afraid of it."

"I never saw it in that light before," said Lorenzo.

She drew a little away from him, and looked at him askance. "How do I know but I was trying to make you feel, all the time in the march, that I was graceful? How do I know but what I just thought my foot was hurt, so that you would *have* to carry me——"

"Now, look here, Althea, that young woman has made you blame yourself for nothin'. You 're perfectly notionate about it——"

She caught his hand where it lay next her on the seat, and pressed it nervously,

piteously. "*Try* to think back—far back, Lorenzo—and see if there was not something different in your mind that made you foolish about me before you noticed that I was—sightly. See if you didn't think I was bright *first*. I shouldn't want them to say in the Family that we were taken with each other's *looks*."

Lorenzo thought, as he was bid. "Nay, I guess it was the looks first, as far as *I* went," he said faithfully. "It was afterwards that I thought you was smart."

"Oh!" she said, and a little gush of tears came into her eyes.

They were both silent for a time, and then Lorenzo said, "I know it seems kind of demeanin', but I don't know as you can say it's wrong exactly. I presume it's the way that folks have begun to feel foolish ever since—there was any folks. And I presume the looks must have been given to us for some good purpose?" He suggested rather than asserted this, with his eyes fastened tenderly upon Althea's face, which, blurred with tears as it was, was still so pretty. She wiped her eyes with the handkerchief he had bought her that morning, and then tucked it, with a little vivid, graceful motion, into the waist of her dress.

When he began again it was with more confidence, more authority of tone. "The way I think we had ought to look at it is this: It's the body that contains the soul, and the body is outside of the soul, and it comes first, and it has a right to, as long as it's outside the soul. It can't help it, and the soul can't help it. But I believe we shall find each other in the soul more and more."

"Do you really think that, Lorenzo?"

"Yee, I do, and I wouldn't say it just to comfort you."

"I know you wouldn't, Lorenzo. You are true—truer than I am."

She rose, and they walked silently out of the park together. Beyond the gate he asked her, "Where would you like to go now, Althea?"

"To the minister's," she said.

Lorenzo arrested her in a panic. "Not unless you want to go there of your own accord, Althea."

"I do."

"Do you feel as if I had coaxed you to do it—hurried you any?"

"Nay, you always do what you say you will do. If I only felt as sure of myself as I do of you!"

"Oh, *I* do!" said Lorenzo. "I presume," he continued, as if from the necessity of finding a reason for her conclusion, "you'll feel full better about lettin' that driver and the young woman think we're married if we really *are* married."

"Nay, what difference does that make now?" she demanded scornfully.

"I don't know as it does a great deal," he assented.

"If we're like the world-outside in one thing, we must be like it in all," she said.

Lorenzo did not answer.

XIII.

IT was the minister himself again who opened the lattice door to them. "Oh, here you are back! I am glad to see you. Well, have you made up your minds?" He spoke while they were getting through the entry into his dim parlour, with a tone of pleasantry.

Althea took the word. "Yee, we have made up our minds."

"And you really intend to get married this time?" He looked at Lorenzo.

"Yee, we do."

"I suppose you've thought it over thoroughly. I wish all the young people who come to me would do so. It would save a great deal of hopeless and useless thinking afterwards. If you'll sit down I will call my wife, and——"

He left them alone a moment, and Lorenzo whispered, "Althea, if you want to ask him again how he looks at that point in Luke——"

"Nay, we can see it as clearly as he can. We have got all the light there is."

"Yee, I presume that is so."

They had each other by the hand, and she pressed his hand convulsively, "Don't say anything more, Lorenzo."

"Just as you say, Althea."

After a little delay the minister returned, bringing his wife with him—a short, stout little brunette, who had the effect of having hurriedly encased herself for the occasion in a black silk dress she wore. She glanced at Althea with a certain dislike or defiance in her look, as one does at a stranger whom one has heard prejudicial things of; and if the minister had told her of Althea's misgivings it might well have incensed a wife and mother.

He introduced them to her as Miss Brown and Mr. Weaver, and he said, "Well, now, if you will take your places," and when they stood before him he began the ceremony.

Lorenzo, when he was asked if he would take Althea to be his wedded wife, helplessly answered, "Yee," and Althea did the same in her turn.

The light of a smile came over the minister's face at their answers, and when he had pronounced them man and wife and blessed

them, he said, laughing, "I suppose that this comes as near being a Shaker wedding as any could. Did you make the responses purposely in Shaker parlance?"

"Did we say yee?" Lorenzo asked of Althea.

"Yee, we did," she said, and he smiled, but she did not. "I heard *you* say it, and I guess *I* did."

They both sat down again, and the minister's wife was about to sit down too, seeing that they were not going away, when there came loud cries of grief and rage from the back of the house, and she ran out to still them. The minister went to a writing-desk and filled up a certificate of marriage, which he handed to Althea, and then he sat down too.

"I don't know why we always make the ladies the custodians of these things, but we do. I think myself it's often quite as important to the husband to know that he is married."

"And are we married now?" she faltered. "Is that all?"

"Quite. It wasn't so very formidable, was it?"

"But—but——" She stopped, as if in a fright. "But it isn't *over*? I thought—I

thought there was something more; and that—that—— Do you mean that now we couldn't change?"

"Why, surely," said the minister, "you understood what you were doing? Didn't you suppose that when I asked you if you would take this man for your husband, I was asking you if you would marry him?"

"Yee, I knew that. But I didn't think that was all there was to it."

"I presume," Lorenzo began, "that it's because you ain't used to it, Althea."

The minister broke in with a laugh. "It's to be hoped that you won't get into the habit of it, Mrs. Weaver; some people do. But you're quite right about it, in one sense. This isn't all there is of marriage, and it isn't all over by any means. It's just begun." He sat rocking and smiling at them, and they remained rigidly upright in their chairs.

"I presume," said Lorenzo, "that there's some charge. How much will it be?"

The minister seemed amused at the bluntness of the demand. "There's no fee." He had apparently a little difficulty in adding, "It is something we always leave to the bridegroom."

Lorenzo took out his roll of bank-notes.

He peeled one off the roll, and handed it to the minister. "That be enough?"

The minister took the ten-dollar note and looked at it. "I think it would be altogether too much unless you are richer than I imagine."

"Well," said Lorenzo proudly, "I started with a hundred dollars last night."

"And is that all your worldly wealth?"

"I've got a lot in Fitchburg that's worth four hundred more."

"Is that so?" asked the minister. "You are a capitalist. Still, I think that if you happen to have a one-dollar bill in that roll I should prefer it."

"I guess I got one," said Lorenzo with the same phlegm; and he looked among the notes till he found a dollar bill, which he gave to the minister.

"Ah, thank you," said the minister; and he added, "I don't suppose you had quite the training of a financier—a moneyed man—in the Family?"

Lorenzo laughed. "I never had a cent in my hands till a week ago, when I left the Family. The Trustees do all the buyin'."

"Is it possible, is it possible?" cried the minister. "You are of the resurrection, indeed! You begin to convert me! Do

you think they would admit me to the Family?"

"Oh yee," said Lorenzo gravely. "You would have to separate, and give up your children."

"Ah, that isn't so simple. At any rate it requires reflection. But to be in a condition where the curse of money is taken away! What is the name of your family: Eden? Paradise? Golden Age?"

"Nay," returned Lorenzo with seriousness; "we came from Harshire."

There seemed to be nothing more to say or do, but Lorenzo would probably not have got away of his own motion. It was Althea who had to say to the minister, "Well, good afternoon"; and when he offered his hand in response, it was she who had first to take it. She did it very stiffly, but Lorenzo gave it a large, loose grasp, and held it a moment, as if trying to think of something grateful, or at least fitting, before he said, "Well, good afternoon," in his turn.

XIV.

ON their way back to the hotel they were silent till Lorenzo took out the money he had put loosely into his pocket, and folded it more neatly. He turned the notes over, and then felt in his other pockets, as if he thought he might have misplaced some of them. Althea did not seem to notice what he was doing. She walked rapidly a little ahead of him.

"Althea," he said gently, and a little timidly, "I don't know as we better stay in Saratoga—well, not a great deal longer." She looked round. "I—I—the money seems to be nearly all gone. I guess we ha'n't got much more than enough to pay for our tickets back to Fitchburg."

She appeared not to understand at first. Then she said passionately, "Let us go at once, then! I shall be glad to go. Don't let's stay a minute longer. It's *dreadful* to me here!"

"Just as you say, Althea," he returned

submissively. "I presume we might well stay till after supper. We've p it, and the cars don't——"

"Go and see if there isn't an earlier t if there isn't one that starts right off. to start *now*."

"Why, Althea——"

"Don't try to speak to me, Lorenzo

"Nay, I won't, then. But I got t you to the hotel, and get them to sh where the room is."

"Well?"

"And then I'll go round to the dep find out about the cars."

As they mounted the steps of the porch a girlish figure in light blue ca ing towards them from the end of th verandah. It was young Mrs. Cargat waved a telegram in the air. "Oh coming!" she called to them. "He' ing to-night! He'll be here on the o'clock train! Oh, it seems as if I cou I'm so glad! I could just hug every I must hug somebody; I must kiss—— ran upon Althea, and flung her arms her, and put up her pouted lips.

Althea pulled away, and, with her thrown back, "Nay," she said icily, don't kiss."

The young woman released her. "You don't *kiss*? Well, if that isn't the best joke yet! When I tell George about this! Why, what do you and Mr. Wea——"

"It's against our religion," said Lorenzo sternly, and his face was the face of an ascetic as he spoke.

The young woman gasped, and retreated from them, staring at them as she paced slowly backward. She turned and ran, with a cry of laughter, towards the black figure of her silent mother at the end of the verandah.

At the door of their room Lorenzo left Althea. "I will go and see about the cars now. You get the things all ready, so that we needn't lose any time if the cars start anyways soon." He spoke with an austerity which was like something left of the tone he had used in rebuking that young woman. It was gone when he came back, and called gently, on the outside of the door, "Althea!"

"Yee, Lorenzo," her voice answered, "come in!"

He opened the door, and stood staring at her from the threshold. She sat dressed in her garb of Shakeress—the plain, straight gown of drab, the drab shawl crossed upon her breast, the close collar that came up to

her chin; her face was hidden in the depths of the Shaker bonnet.

"Well, well!" he murmured huskily.

"Sit down, Lorenzo," she said.

"There ain't much time, Althea. The cars start in about half an hour, and——" He glanced about the room, where, on chairs and sofas, were strewn the finery that Althea had worn during the day; the packages of her afternoon purchases had been torn open, and their contents scattered about on the floor. His eye caught upon a fashionable gown of grey stuff. "That your travelling-dress, Althea?" he asked feebly.

"I have got on my travelling-dress, Lorenzo. I am going back to the Family."

"Yee," he vaguely assented.

"I tried to put that dress on," she continued; "I couldn't." She paused, as if for him to say something, but he did not say anything. "I have thought it all out at last, Lorenzo. I don't blame the earthly order; it's the best thing there is in the world-outside. But we have known the heavenly order, and if—even if—we were to be very happy together——"

She stopped, and he said, "Yee."

"Or, that isn't it, either. They may be all wrong in what they taught us in the Family."

Lorenzo cleared his throat. "It did seem so—for a spell."

"But whether it was right or whether it was wrong, whether it was true or whether it was false, *it's too strong for me now*, and it would be too strong as long as I lived. I have got to go back."

"Have you thought what they will say?"

"Haven't I thought what they would say every minute since I stole out of the Family house like a thief and ran away? But I don't care what they will say. They will take me back, I know that, and that is all I care for."

"Yee."

"I want you should let me go as far as Fitchburg with you, and then I can easily get to Harshire."

He stared at her. "Althea, do you think I am going to let you go back *alone*?" he asked solemnly. "I am going back to Harshire with you."

"Nay, Lorenzo, I have thought that out too. I blame myself for getting married to you."

"I wanted to full as much as you did, Althea. It was my fault too."

"I thought—I thought if it was over I should feel differently, and see it as folks do in the world-outside."

"Yee, I knew that, Althea. I wouldn't have let you if I hadn't understood it so. I could see how your mind was workin'."

"But I *can't* see it so, Lorenzo! The more I look at it the worse it seems for us!"

"It 's strange," he mused aloud, "that we can't look at it in their light. Is it a sin for all the world?"

"It isn't a sin for the world, for the world hasn't the same light as ours. But we should be shutting our eyes to the light!"

"Yee," he assented sadly.

"But, Lorenzo," she entreated passionately, "if you *say* for me to stay in the world-outside with you and be your wife, I will do it! Do you say so? Do you say so?" She came towards him with her hands clasped, and her face wild in the depths of her Shaker bonnet, where her tears shone dimly. "I'm nothing! What do I care for myself? It 's only the truth I care for, and the light! But if you say so, Lorenzo, the light of the world shall be *my* light, the *darkness* shall be my light!"

There was a moment before he answered, "Nay, I don't say so, Althea!"

"Oh!" She fell back in her chair and began to sob.

"Do you think," he asked, "that I could

be anyways comfortable knowin' that you wanted to live the angelic life, and I was draggin' you down to the earthly?"

"The angelic life wouldn't be anything without you, Lorenzo," she said tenderly, but with a confusion of purpose which was not, perhaps, apparent even to herself.

"Nor the earthly order without you," he answered solemnly. He added, with that mixture of commonplace which was an element in his nature, "I presume, if I wanted to stay in the world-outside, I could get a divorce easy enough; but if I can't have you, I don't want to stay. If you can't feel that it's right for you to live in the earthly order, I know it can't be right for me either. We can do like so many of them have done: we can go back to the Family, and live there separate. It will be a cross, but it won't be any more of a cross for us than it is for the others that have separated; and maybe—maybe we ought to bear a cross."

"Don't *try* to make me cry, Lorenzo!"

He looked round the room again, disordered with the pretty things she had flung about. "I declare," he said dreamily, "that hat's got to look like you."

"Lorenzo!"

"If you 've got on everything you need, Althea, we 'll leave these things here. We sha'n't want 'em any more where we 're goin'." He stopped, and they stood looking at each other. "Althea, we have got to tell them everything we 've done when we get back."

"Yee."

"Do you believe, Althea," he said, in a voice that came like a thick whisper from his throat, "that they would think any the worse of you if I was to—kiss you?"

"I don't know, Lorenzo."

"It would be for good-bye, just once; and it would be my fault, and not yours."

"I don't want you should bear the blame. If you were to do it, it would be—because I let you."

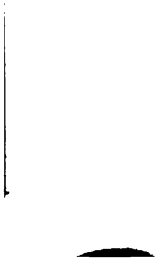
He caught her to his breast; she laid her arms tenderly about his neck; their heads were both hidden in her Shaker bonnet.

"Now come," he said.

They walked along towards the statin rapidly, Lorenzo some paces ahead of Althea, and they looked as if they did not belong together. A young fellow in a light wood-coloured surrey, with a pair of slender sorrels, drew up to the sidewalk, and called to

Lorenzo, "Carriage! Want a ca——" His eye strayed from Lorenzo to the figure of Althea in her Shaker dress. He pushed up his hat, and the cigar which he was smoking dropped from his parting lips. They passed him without looking up, but his head was drawn round after them, as if by a magnetic attraction, and he remained staring at them over his shoulder till they were lost to sight at the corner turning to the station.

A PARTING AND A MEETING.



A PARTING AND A MEETING.

I.

THEY drove along in the old chaise, with the top down, under the bright forenoon sun. The June warmth had a hint of summer heat in it, but a light wind blew cool in their faces out of the north-west. It had rained over night, and the earth seemed washed as clean as the sky. Where the woods were cut away from the smoothly packed road, the laurel was coming in bloom; where the trees closed upon it the pine tufts purred, and the birch leaves sang in the breeze, so near that she had to put up her hand to keep a bough from switching her in the face now and then; the horse made snatches at the foliage, and from time to time champed thoughtfully on his bit, as if he fancied he might have caught a leaf in his mouth.

The young man held the lax rein in one hand, while he held closely in the other the hand of the young girl beside him. She seemed more conscious of what the horse was doing than he, and she returned his long gaze with eyes that made little flights of anxiety away from his, to the right and the left, and then settled back to the joy of dwelling on his face. It was the thin, aquiline face of New England; the cheek-bones were high, and touched with a colour that kept itself pure, though his long hands were a country brown; his eyes were blue, and his hair pale yellow. His looks had no aquiline fierceness from his profile, but only a gentle intensity, unless it might better be called a mild rapture.

The girl beside him sat pulled away into the corner of the chaise, and yet drawn towards him in a tender droop. Her face was somewhat narrow, and that made the corners of her pretty mouth show far into her cheeks. Her nose was tilted a little above it, but it was straight and fine from the tip upward; her eyes were set rather near together, and her forehead had the hair drawn low on it, and close to her mobile brows. A wide-fronted scoop-bonnet flared round her little head, with ribbons

that fell to the waist of her very high-waisted green silk dress, made in the fashion of seventy years ago, with a skirt ending in closely gathered ruffles a foot deep. The young man wore a blue coat with brass buttons, tight sleeves, and a high quilted collar; he had passed several times round his throat a cambric cravat; and his pantaloons, closely fitted to his legs, met his gaiters at the ankles. They were country people, and their costumes, which their figures gave distinction, were not those of the very moment in London and Paris.

II.

HE was Roger Burton, and he had taught the academy at Birchfield for the past year. He was twenty-seven, and Chloe Mason was twenty. Her father was the doctor in Birchfield, and when Roger came up from Boston way to take the school, he spent a few days in the doctor's house, until he could find a settled boarding-place. Chloe had been the head of the household since her mother's death, and she sat at the head of the table, and poured out Roger's tea without looking towards him, so that it could hardly be called love at sight in her. But they both fell in love with each other at once, and they began keeping company almost from the first.

Before the end of the first year it was known that they were engaged, but they were not really engaged till quite near the close of the spring term. Then she ran away from home for a little visit at her grandfather's in Medbury, to have a chance,

she said, to think it over. As soon as the school closed he came after her; he told her that he came to help her think. She answered him, from the fright and joy his coming gave her, that this was a silly excuse, and she would hardly kiss him; but she let him stay till eleven o'clock, the night he arrived, before she drove him away to the tavern at the cross-roads where he had put up. She said she guessed he would get locked out if he was not careful; and, in fact, the landlord came down to let him in with his night-clothes on, but chewing tobacco as if it were high noon. That was Friday night, and this was Saturday morning.

The horse and chaise were her grandfather's, and the squire told the young man that if he was not going anywhere in particular, and not in a hurry to get there, the horse was just the horse he wanted.

III.

THEY started early, to be alone together as long as they could, and they let the horse loiter over the road at will. They were not always quite certain where they were, but again Chloe thought she knew; she used to be a great deal at her grandfather's when she was little, and every now and then she did really come to a place that she remembered.

As they lingered on the way, they talked without stopping a moment. Their love was yet so newly owned that they were full of delicious surprises for each other, whether they found out that they were alike in a thing, or unlike.

"What are you looking at so hard?" she asked, at one time, and a little quaver came into her voice, which almost died in her throat from emotion.

"What are *you* looking at so hard?" he demanded in turn; and they took a fresh hold upon each other's hands.

"I am not looking at anything," she said, and she let her glance flutter away from him to prove it.

"I am looking at something," he said. "I am looking at your mouth."

"What for?" she tempted him.

"To see why it is so beautiful. I am glad it isn't one of those shallow mouths, that seem just on the surface."

He continued to study her face with a dreamy interest which she bore without blushing. "Features don't seem to mean much of anything if you take them separately; and it's the look in a face that keeps it together. I wonder what it is makes your look? The soul, I suppose; the features don't, and it must be our souls that we care for in one another. Don't you believe so?"

"Yes; of course. It's you I care for; and I should care just as much for you if you were dead and gone, as I do now," said the girl.

"When you went away," he continued, "I tried to picture your face in my mind. But I couldn't. You were just something sweet and true; something dear and lovely; but you had no form."

"Well, *I* could see *you* as plain as if you

stood before me all the time. And you were full as real."

"That is very curious." He resumed his contemplation of her face, from the muse he had fallen into. "How strange it all is. Is this you, Chloe, or is something else you? When I think of you—when I look at you——"

She suddenly lost her patience. "Well, don't look *so* at me!"

"How?"

"As if you didn't see me!"

"But I do see you!"

"Well, then, *look* as if you did. Oh, look out for that horse!" The horse had turned abruptly out of the road towards a bit of pasturage near the wayside wall: the chaise hung by one wheel at the edge of the gully dividing the road from the grass that had taken his fancy. "In another minute we should have been tipped over. Do be careful, Roger!" she palpitated, after he had recalled the horse from his wanderings, and set out with him again on theirs. "If you can't drive any better than that, you'd better let me."

"Would you like to drive? You may!"

"If I did, I shouldn't go to sleep over it. How absent-minded you are!"

"Don't you like it?"

"*I* like—you. Oh, don't! There's a

carriage coming! I should think you would be ashamed! Well—*there*, then! And I *know* they saw us!"

"I don't believe they did. They were too far off. See! they are turning down another road."

"Well, do behave, anyway!"

"May I put my arm around you?"

"No, I want to talk seriously with you, Roger; and I can't think if you do that."

"How strange that is! I wish you would explain why you can't think if I put my arm around you. What do you do if you don't think?"

"How silly! Feel, I presume."

"Well, why not feel, then? Feeling is better than thinking, if love is feeling, isn't it? But perhaps love is thinking, too."

"It ought to be," she sighed. "Or, at least, we ought to think about it."

"Well, let us think about it, then; I don't know a pleasanter subject. What do you suppose it really is? Why should I care so much for you and nothing for another person? What is the law of it? For it must have a law. It wasn't blind chance that made us care for each other. You can't imagine our caring for any one else?"

"No. I can't imagine that at all—now."

"*Now?*"

"Why, I presume if I hadn't ever seen you—if you hadn't ever come to Birchfield—I might have got to caring for somebody else. Ira Dickerman, very likely." She pulled away to her corner of the chaise, and looked at him with mocking laughter in her eyes.

The young man turned his face away, and she looked forward and peered up into it to see if she had vexed him. But he only said, rather sadly: "Ira is smart. He will make a good lawyer. He is more practical than I am. Your father would rather have had him, Chloe."

"Father can have him yet if he wants him," said the girl, and they both laughed. "*I* don't. But I guess you can be practical enough—if you want to."

"You're afraid I sha'n't want to. Is that what you're going to be serious about?"

"Not unless you wish I should, Roger," she answered fondly.

"I do wish you should. How do you think I could be more practical?"

"Well, grandfather thinks you might study law while you're teaching; *he* did. And I don't believe he cares much for writing poetry—There! *I* like it! And I presume they all think——"

"What?"

"That you 're rather notional."

Roger sighed.

"I presume I shall always be a schoolmaster. I shall never be very well off, nor get into Congress—like Ira."

"Now, if you keep bringing up Ira Dickerman——"

"I won't. But I know they 'd rather—Well, I won't say it! And they 're right about me. I know I'm notional." He was silent long enough to let her deny that he was notional at all; and then he said: "There is one thing that troubles me, Chloe. Last night I got to thinking—— Now, this will make you angry!"

"No, go on!" said the girl, and she took a firmer grip of his hand to reassure him.

"You know what our thoughts are, and how they won't be commanded? Well, last night I didn't sleep much. I got to thinking about love." She blushed a little, and her hand trembled in his.

"There 's something in me—I don't know how to explain it exactly—that makes me hate to have things fade out, and die out, the way they all seem to do. I should like to get something that would last. Now, the way I look at married people, their love doesn't seem to have lasted. They 're good

friends—sometimes, and I don't know but most of the time—but something 's gone, and it seems to be their love. How did it go? When did it begin to go? It seems now to be the whole of life, and if life went on anywhere else, love ought to go on with it. If we can't think how it had a beginning—and I can't; it seems to me as if I always cared for you——"

"That's just the way it seems to me, too," she murmured.

"Why, then, it oughtn't to be possible for it to have an end."

"No."

Something in her tone made him look up at her, for he had been talking with a downward glance, in the way he had, and now he saw her chin trembling. He was beginning, "Do you believe"; but he ended, "I don't believe our love will pass away; I can't believe it."

She made two or three trials before she could harden herself to say: "I don't see how we're different from other folks."

"But we *can* be different. We can say, here and now, that we will love each other so that our love will never die as long as we live, can't we? Let us think. Of course, I know that you are beautiful, and I do love

your beauty." She gave a little sob, and he said, "Oh, don't!"

She pulled her hand away to make search for her handkerchief. "It isn't anything. I can't help it. I presume I like *your* looks, too, Roger. Do you think that is wrong?"

She glimmered at him with wet eyes above the handkerchief she held over her quivering mouth.

"Oh no! It can't be."

"But you think—you think if we care for each other's looks so much, and the looks go—that—that——"

"No, I don't think that."

"Yes, you do, Roger! You must be honest with me. You know you think that! Well, I hope I shall die, then, before my looks go; for if you didn't care for me——"

"Chloe! Do you think it was your looks I fell in love with? You know it wasn't. It was you—*you* behind your looks. Something that was more you than all your looks are. And I believe that my love for you will last for ever, just what it is now."

"You are just *saying* that."

"Indeed, I am not. I believe that if people truly love each other—what is best in each other—as we do, their love *cannot*

die. I know that you don't care for my looks any more than I care for yours."

She had dried her eyes, but she shook her head wofully, with so tragical a droop of the corners of her mouth that when she said innocently, "I don't know," Burton broke out laughing, and dropped the reins altogether to catch her in his arms and kiss the droop out of both the corners. The horse seized a moment favourable for browsing, and drew up as skilfully as if he had been driven to a wayside birch, and began a tranquil satisfaction of his baffled appetite for foliage.

"Poor girl! Now I have made you unhappy?"

"No, no!" she said, laughing and crying at once, and struggling as much to keep herself in his hold as to release herself from it. "I am not unhappy at all. I am excited. And I said as much as you did—I was as much to blame—I put you up to it. I presume I'm crying more to think how miserable I should be if I didn't trust you so. But if I trust you I am not afraid, and you may go on and say anything."

"No," he returned with a sort of serious joy, "I have nothing more to say. And perhaps you have got at the answer to the

riddle. If we always have faith we shall have love. Or, turn it the other way; it's true that way, too."

"He sat, letting her get back her spirits and repair her looks, and he would perhaps not have started of his own motion at all. When she put her handkerchief back into her pocket at last, she said gently: "Don't you think we'd better drive on, Roger? I'm afraid it's getting late."

He pulled out the burly silver watch whose seal dangled by a black ribbon from his fob.

"It's only eleven, we can easily get back by twelve, if we can only find out where we are, and start right."

She looked out to the right and left, and then stood up and peered around. "I don't seem to know anything here. It's a judgment on us for talking so, if we're lost!"

"Then yonder's a sign of forgiveness," said Roger, and he pointed with his whip towards the finger-board at the cross-roads a little way in front of them.

"So it is!" she cried joyfully, and she composed herself in her seat again, while Roger prevailed with the old horse to go so much further as to bring them in reading range of the finger-board. It pointed with

one finger towards the little hamlet or group of houses where Chloe's grandfather lived, seven miles away.

"Dear!" she cried. "I don't see how we ever got so far, or how we came. We shall be dreadfully late to dinner."

"Did they expect us back!" asked the young man.

"I don't know. I presume so. I *did* tell grandfather we might go to Louisburg. What does it say on the other side?"

He urged the horse a little way round, so as to read on the reverse of the board—

SHAKERS, ONE-HALF MILE.

"Oh, *now* I know where I am!" she exulted. "Did you ever go to a Shaker village?" and she hardly waited for him to say no. "Well, then, it's the greatest thing in the world to see; and I can't think why I didn't bring you here in the first place. I can get grandmother's things here just as well, and a great deal better; I told her that if we went to Louisburg I'd go to the store for her, but now it's all turned out for the best, and I can show you the Shaker village. I used to come here with grandfather when I was little. He did some law

business for them. You 've surely heard of them, Roger?"

"Oh yes; but I don't remember what, exactly. Do they have a tavern? Perhaps we could get dinner there."

"Yes; we could. They have no tavern, but they entertain anybody that asks. If you haven't ever been in a Shaker settlement —drive right straight along, Roger—I guess you 'll think it the most curious place you were ever in. They think they 're like the early Christians; they live all in two or three big families, and own everything together. They came in here from York State, and they say Mother Ann saw the place in a vision before they came."

"Mother Ann?"

"Yes; she 's the one that founded them; they believe she had revelations. Folks say they have a little pen on the side of the hill behind the village, and they think they have got Satan shut up in it. Grandfather doesn't believe they think that. They think they are living the angelic life here on earth, and they dance in their meetings."

Roger tried to get the horse in motion.

"Well, let us go there, then! I should like to know what the angelic life looks like."

"Well, if it's like *that*," said Chloe, and she laughed as if at some grotesque memory.

"Are they so ridiculous?"

"No. Not always. And I can't understand folks going to make fun, the way some do. It isn't dancing exactly, it's more like marching. And they have preaching, and singing of their own kind that the spirits gave them. It's a pity it isn't Sunday, so that we could go to one of their meetings. I don't know as it's right to go to a meeting just out of curiosity, though. Do you think it would be?"

"You seem to have done so."

"Grandfather took me, and I was little; grandmother didn't like it, even then, I guess. I don't know whether we better go to the Shakers after all, Roger!"

"But we can't go to their meeting to-day, you say——"

"No, that's true. I forgot. And I suppose it will be about the best thing we can do. It's rather of an old story to me."

"Then we won't go, Chloe. I don't care for it, unless you do."

"Yes, yes. Go on. I only wanted to know if you really *did* care."

He shook the reins again and said, "Get

up," and the horse looked round as if to assure himself that it was he was meant. He made a final snatch at random among the nearest boughs, and came off with his mouth full of pine-needles.

IV.

THE grassy-bordered sandy street of the village was silent and empty under the shade of the stiff maples. The lovers drove slowly through, looking out on either side of the chaise for some one to speak with; but no sign of life showed itself in the dwelling-houses, or in the gardens above or below the thoroughfare, which divided the slope where the village lay. Sounds of labour made themselves vaguely heard from the shops set here and there along the road; and from further up the hillside came the stamping of horses in the great barns.

But there was such a stillness in the a which muffled these noises, that the lov involuntarily sank their voices in speak together. "I don't know where to exactly," said Roger. "I can't find body."

"Oh, well, don't let's stop then," answered. "Let us go right on th

I don't know as I want to stop very much, anyway."

He did not hear her, perhaps, or perhaps his curiosity was now piqued, and he was not willing to go further without satisfying it. He was craning his neck round the side of the chaise, and looking back at the doorway of one of the buildings.

"I thought I saw some one in that house —at the door."

She looked back too. "Why, of course! That's the office. I remember it just as well! I don't see what I mean, acting so. Turn right around, Roger! That's where they entertain strangers. What could I be thinking of?" Her tremor of reluctance, whatever it was from, was past, and she urged him to a feat which had its difficulties. He turned and drove back.

On the threshold of the building where they drove up, a Shaker brother was standing.

"Sir, good morning!" the young man called politely to him. "Could I put up my horse somewhere? We should like to see the village, if you allow strangers."

"Yee," said the brother. "I will take your horse," and he came down the steps to the horse's head.

Roger helped Chloe out, and he saw that her eyes were red and her cheeks blurred from the tears she had shed. "Wouldn't you like some water?" he whispered; and she gasped back, "Yes."

"Could we get some water inside?" he asked the brother.

"Yee; you can go into the office with the young woman. The sisters will give you some water. I will see to your horse."

V.

WITHIN, it was all cool and bare and clean. A sister came through the carpetless hallway towards them, and offered to show them into the little parlour beside the door.

Chloe looked at her, and then, after a first timid glance, broke into a smile. "I used to come here with my grandfather, Squire Pullen, when I was a little girl. Don't you remember me?"

"Nay," said the sister, briefly; but she let her eyes wander from the girl's flushing face to the young man's with a demure and not unfriendly interest.

"Well," said Chloe, "we wanted to see the village if we could, and I should like somewhere to fix my hair; I 'm afraid it 's coming down."

"I will take you to a room," answered the sister; and she nodded Roger towards the parlour door, "You can go in there."

It was cool and clean, like the hall, and it

seemed as bare, though there were cl
and a settee in it, and some hooked ru
the floor. There was even a looking-g
and on a table under it were some Sh
books and papers, a life of Ann Lee, a
volume of doctrine. He took this up,
he had it in his hand when Chloe retu
with the sister, smiling and flushing,
looking very gay and happy. "This is
Burton," she said. "Mr. Burton, th
Sister Candace."

The sister smiled and stood apart
the pair, looking them over and takir
the fashion of their worldly dress, as w
their young beauty. But she did not
anything, and Burton, after a formal
fession of his pleasure in making
acquaintance, had to leave the wor
Chloe, who kept talking, and would no
him appear awkward. After a momen
sister said: "I will go and see to
dinner," and then Chloe ran over to E
and hurried to say, under her breath
had to tell her, because I knew she w
guess it anyway; and she knows gr
father, and I didn't want her to t
that I would go wandering about
just anybody; I saw she wanted to
and she *was* so pleased. I had to

her all about you, and I don't believe but what she thinks you're pretty nice appearing, Roger. I could tell by the way she looked at you. But, of course, she couldn't say much. Do I look now as if I had been crying any?"

He glanced at her face, turned innocently upon him. "You don't look as if you had ever shed a tear."

"Well, I can't believe I ever did."

"I wish I could believe I hadn't made you."

"Oh, pshaw! You didn't. I was just nervous. I cry too easily. I have got to break myself of it; and you mustn't think it means anything, because it doesn't. Don't you suppose I knew just what you meant? I did, perfectly well, all the time." She put out the hand that was next him, and gave his a little clutch, and after that she began to talk in a very loud voice about the things in the room. From time to time she dropped her voice, and once she explained in an undertone that she had asked Sister Candace whether they could have dinner. "I didn't know but you would hate to ask," and Roger said gratefully, yes; and he was much obliged to her.

"You know, I'm so used to their ways;

or I used to be; but I could see how it took you aback when they said just yea and nay to you. You mustn't mind it; they do it because the Bible says so. They do say yee, but that's just the way they pronounce it."

She patronised him a little from the pinnacle of her early familiarity with the Shakers, and explained what the office was, and how it was for business and the reception of visitors from the world-outside.

"Then you don't suppose they will let us go into the family houses," he said rather disappointedly.

"Why, I'll ask Sister Candace when we're at dinner," Chloe answered consolingly. "I don't believe they let everybody, but I guess they'll let us. They think so much of grandfather."

VI.

AN old man came out of the doorway across the hall, and looked in upon them. "Is this Friend Pullen's granddaughter?" he asked. He had a shrewd face, but kindly, and he spoke neatly, with a Scotch accent.

"Yes!" said Chloe. "And I remember you, Elder Lindsley. You haven't changed at all since I used to come here with grandfather. Did you know me?"

"Nay," said the elder. "They told me in the office. I am very pleased to see you. You are quite a young woman." He spoke to her, but his eyes wandered to Roger.

Hers followed them, and she said, "This is Mr. Burton, Elder Lindsley; and we're—he's never been in a Shaker village before—and I thought—he teaches the academy at Birchfield—and do you suppose we could go into some of the family houses?"

"Oh yee," the old man answered, and he gave Roger his hand. "We shall be very pleased to have you. They said that you were engaged to be married to the young woman."

"My!" answered Chloe, "has she told already!" and she laughed, while Roger blushed, and mumbled a confession of the fact.

"Well, you must come and see how we live in our families without being married."

"I have been reading something about your system here," said Roger, and he looked down at the volume of doctrine on the table.

"I suppose it appears strange to you," the elder returned. "But we try to live as Jesus Christ lived in all things. If you are a teacher, you will have read a great many books——"

"Not so very many," Roger interposed modestly.

"And you will know that we are not so singular in our way of life as the folks around us have imagined. We are of an order which has appeared in every religion."

"Yes, I know," the young man admitted. "It is the same principle that has led men out of the world in all ages. I understand that."

"Yes. The inspiration of the angelic life has never ceased, and you find its effect in the celibacy of the Buddhists as well as the Roman Catholics, and the Essenes of the Hebrews."

VII.

CHLOE looked at Roger with a novel awe for him as one to whom such esoteric things could be intelligibly spoken. Perhaps a little fear mingled with her pride; they removed him from her, and she brightened when, after the talk got further away, Sister Candace appeared at the parlour, and brought her the hope of getting it back to familiar ground again.

The elder said promptly, "I hope you have asked the young friends to stay to dinner with you, Candace."

"Nay," said the Sister. "But we have got them dinner."

"They must be your guests," said the elder.

"Yee; we shall be much pleased," she returned.

"And after dinner," he said to Roger, "some of the Sisters will show the young woman and yourself through the family houses. We shall see each other again before you go."

He went out, and the lovers followed the

Sister to a stairway descending to a basement at the end of the hall. Roger looked round after the old man. The Sister explained to his returning glance, "Elder Lindsley eats in the church-family house. He is one of the ministers."

She took her guests into a room where a table was laid with such simple and wholesome abundance that Chloe cried out at the sight: "Why, you look as if you had been expecting us for a week, Candace!"

"We are always expecting some one," said the Sister. "At least, we are always prepared."

"Do you mean," the young man demanded, "that you give meals to any who come to you?"

"Yee. Give to him that asketh," the Sister returned.

They seemed to be alone in the room with her; but if Chloe looked round, it was to glimpse, at a half-opened door, some vanishing face which had been fixed upon herself or on Roger.

When Sister Candace had placed them at table, and gone out to get their dinner in the kitchen adjoining, it was not she who returned, but another Sister, and it was still a third who came to take the things away.

VIII.

THE same curiosity followed them or went before them in the dwellings they visited, after they had finished their dinner, and the office Sisters delivered them over to the other Sisters. Some rumour of their relation to each other seemed to have spread through the quiet community, and stirred it from its wonted calm. Perhaps some of them remembered Chloe when she was a little girl, and used to visit them with her grandfather. Perhaps it was enough that any young girl should be among them with the young man she was going to marry. They were met everywhere by more Sisters than sufficed to show them through the huge dwellings, which they explored in every part, with joyful outcry from Chloe at the perfection of all the domestic appointments, apparent to her housekeeping instincts. She made Roger notice how sweet and clean the white-scrubbed floors were; how the windows shone, and not a

speck of dust rested on chair or table, or even quivered in the pure air, which it was a pleasure to breathe. In the kitchen she said she should like to spend her whole life in such a place. She questioned the Sisters about their way of doing their work, and their preserving and pickling.

From her superabundant joy in her own fate she flattered them in theirs, and pretended to wish she, too, could have such a room as many they saw, appointed for two Sisters to dwell together, with two white beds, two rocking-chairs, two stands, and a sturdy wood stove, and rugs over the spotless floors. She should like nothing better, she sighed, with a sweet hypocrisy; and she would not appear conscious of her interest for the Sisters, singly or in groups, whom they met, and who greeted or pursued her with her eager eyes, as she came up and passed by, in silent homage to a girl who was engaged to be married, and who would be important from that fact to women anywhere, let alone in a place where nobody ever got married. She put Roger forward when he was not sufficiently evident. She laughed to him in pleasure with this or that; she made jokes to him, and coquetted for him with the Sisters.

In one of the great rooms where the

family meetings were held, she tried the spring of the floor which had been laid for the marching or dancing of the Shaker worship; and as she stood in the centre of the place, with her slender arms stretched out and her reticule dangling from one wrist, and looked down to find her little feet beneath her deep ruffles, perhaps she knew that she made a charming picture, and wished to be envied.

It was at this moment that the old minister who had preached joined the group at the door, and smiled at her over the shoulders of the Sisters. The little involuntary flutter among them spread electrically to her. She quailed in a deprecation half sincere, half saucy.

"Nay," the old man called to her. "It is no harm. Wouldn't you like to be a Shaker Sister, and dance here with us?"

"In this dress?" she cried, putting its worldly prettiness in evidence.

"Yee, if you chose. As long as you wished to wear it we should not object."

"Oh, I never believed the Shakers were so wicked," she said audaciously; and now she left her place, and came and sheltered herself next her lover, who was standing near the minister.

"I *was wondering*," the old man said,

still smiling kindly upon her, "whether you would like to look at the barns and shops and gardens. You have seen how we live; you should see how we work."

"No, I am too tired," she began, with a glance at Roger.

"Then the young man would like to come?" the minister suggested.

"Very much; I should like to come very much, indeed. And I should like to talk with you a little more about your life here!"

Roger had not spoken with so much energy before; there was almost passion in his voice, so that she looked at him in surprise.

A shadow of vexation passed over her face, but left it fond again.

"Well, then, I will wait for you in the office. But you mustn't be very long. They will wonder what has kept us so, at grandfather's."

"We will go as far as the office with you," said the minister. "It is on our way. I must see the office Sisters, and give them their charges about not trying to make a Shaker of you. They are great hands for gathering folks in."

"Oh, I will look out for that!" the girl mocked back.

"Well," said the old man soberly, "I should like to have you realise that we are just a large family of brothers and sisters, and nothing else. There is nothing unnatural about us when you come to know us truly."

"I don't think there's anything strange about you, Elder Lindsley," said the girl affectionately. "I used to want to be a Shaker Sister when I was little, and came here with grandfather; and to-day it's brought it all back. I know that you are just like brothers and sisters, and more so than the real ones oftentimes; and if—if—— I know you think you are living the true life, and I only hope you won't look down on us too much, if we can't." She laughed, but the elder replied seriously—

"Nay, you mustn't think we look down on marriage, or condemn it; that is a mistake that the world-outside often makes concerning us. Jesus did not marry, but he made the water wine at a marriage feast. He said that in heaven there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage, and Ann taught by her example that there could be no angelic life in marriage, but in freedom from marriage; the angelic life could begin before death as well as after death. We do not say that marriage is wrong; and we

know that there are many happy marriages, which are entered into from pure affection. I am sure we all wish and hope that yours will be so."

"Oh, thank you, Elder Lindsley. We are both going to try to be good, and if we are *not* happy—well, it won't be Roger's fault."

The old man smiled at the gay tears that came into the eyes she turned on her lover. But he resumed with increasing earnestness: "If it were my place to advise you——"

"Yes, yes! It is!"

"Or, if I were to counsel with you, I should warn you against the very strength of your affection. The love that unites young people cannot keep its promise of happiness. It seems to give all, but it really asks all. The man and the woman suppose that they love one another unselfishly; but it is the very life of such love that each should be loved again; and this is not the law of heavenly love. If any one will prove the truth of what I say, let him think of what comes into the heart of the man or woman who loves, and doubts if he or she be equally loved again."

"Yes," said the girl. "That is what I have often thought, and I know that it is selfish. But we can make it unselfish; and

we are going to. That is, each one is going to try to live up to a higher rule."

The minister passed this vague expression of a vague aspiration. "All we say of Shakerism is that it is a city of refuge from self. It welcomes all who would be at peace; it gives rest. You must not think that we are not men and women of like nature with others, and that it has cost us nothing to renounce the Adamic order of life. We have had our thoughts and longings for wife and husband and children, and the homes they build. Nay, several among us have known all the happiness that the marriage relation can give, and have voluntarily abandoned it for the gospel relation. At the same time, as I said before, we do not condemn marriage. Marriage is the best thing in the world, but not the best thing out of the world. Few things are more pleasing to us than the sight of a young couple living rightly in their order; and we honour, as much as any one, a father and mother dwelling together at the end of a long life, with their children and their grandchildren around them. Only, even in those cases, we remember that marriage is earthly and human, and our gospel relation is divine."

"Oh yes, indeed!" said the girl generously.

They were at the office gate, where Roger and the minister left her. "I won't be long," Roger said. She looked round over her shoulder, after they turned away, and caught her lover looking back. She swept the environment with a lightning glance, and then flung him a swift kiss, and demurely mounted the office steps and went indoors.

IX.

BURTON did not return for a long while, and Chloe, where she sat in talk with the office Sisters, made excuses for him from time to time. At last she saw him through the window at the office gate. Elder Lindsley had come back with him, but he seemed to be taking leave of him there; and she heard him saying: "It is something that requires serious reflection. It is not to be decided rashly."

"I shall do nothing rash," the young man replied. "But if I see the truth——"

The old man lifted his hand in a sort of deprecation, and walked away. Roger came up the steps and into the parlour, with a face that made the girl laugh.

"I don't wonder you're scared," she began. "But if it's late, I'm as much to blame as you are, I guess. I didn't notice till a minute ago that it was nearly four. But now I think we better be going. I don't know what grandmother will think."

"I will get the horse," said Burton, with the same air of distraction.

When they were in the chaise again, and driving away, after as many farewells from her, smiled and nodded at the office Sisters, as he would stay for, she broke out: "Well, I have had the *greatest* time! Don't you believe, I had to tell the Sisters all about how we first met, and everything! They were just as pleased to know as anybody; and they asked when we expected to be married, and whether we were going to keep house, or stay on with father; and how old you were, and I was; and whether your father and mother were living, and you belonged to church; and I don't know *what* else! I guess you 'll think I was pretty silly to talk with them so; and I don't know but I was; but I saw they did want to know so. They were *real* nice, too; and they did make a set at me, just as Elder Lindsley said they would. They asked me whether I saw anything about their life I didn't like, for they wanted to know oftentimes how it seemed to the world-outside; and when I praised it up, and said I didn't see a thing in it that wasn't just as sweet as it could be, and you didn't either, that gave them a chance, and they said the whole family had

taken the greatest fancy to us, and why couldn't we come and live with them? I couldn't hardly believe my ears, but they were in dead earnest; they *are* so innocent. I tried to laugh it off; and I told them we would, maybe, when we were old folks; but they said they had old folks enough, and they wanted young people to join them. They told me all about Mother Ann, and the persecution they used to suffer here; and about their spiritual experiences; and they talked their doctrine into me good and strong, so that I began to get a little bit frightened one while; I didn't know what they would say next. I guess they saw that, because they began to turn the subject. They had lots of stories about the different visitors, and what they seemed to expect to see; and how they wanted to go all through the dwelling-houses, and couldn't understand how they were just like any other private house. I guess we have been particularly privileged, because they said it was only when they saw folks really cared that they let them go through. They all admire *you*, Roger," she went on, with a fond look at his dreamy face; "and I guess if they could get hold of you, they wouldn't trouble much about gathering *me* in!" She laughed

at her own words, and did not mind his continuing grave. "One of the Sisters said they wanted educated people to help spread the truth among people from the world-outside when they came to meeting; and another said that *gone* look in your face made her think of prophesying; but I told her that it was nothing but mooning, and we got into a perfect gale. But if you did join the Shakers, Roger, I guess they'd pet you up enough, and they wouldn't object to all the poetry you were a mind to make. Why, Roger, what *is* the matter?"

"With me?" asked the young man, with a sudden turn towards her.

"Yes; you haven't spoken a word since we started; and I do believe this is the first time you've even looked at me!" There was a little note of indignation in her voice, which was half a tremor of laughter, for though he was staring hard enough at her now, he seemed not to see her. "Has anything happened? Did Elder Lindsley say something you didn't like? You look as cross as two sticks!"

"I'm not cross," Burton began. "He said nothing that wasn't perfectly——"

"Did *he* make a set at *you*, too? I didn't believe he would, after he warned me

so against the Sisters. But didn't you think he spoke beautifully about marriage—praising it up the way he did?"

"Praise up marriage!" the young man echoed. "He condemned it."

"Not at all! He said it was the best thing in the world. Didn't you hear him say they did not condemn it?"

"Yes, but he said that in the heavenly order——"

"Oh, well, he had to say that because he was a Shaker. He had to defend himself, somehow."

Roger looked at the gay, bright face so close to his shoulder, and whatever he might have answered, he said nothing.

"But I *like* the Shakers," she ran on. "*I* think they are as nice as they can be; and if folks live the way they do, I don't see as anybody has a right to say anything. How sweet the Sisters do look; and so clean! And the Brothers, all of them, with their hair all coming down their necks, that way, and their white collars close up under their chins? But it seems very funny the men should let their hair grow long, and the women crop theirs off short. You know they have it cropped off short under their caps?"

"No, I didn't know that."

"Yes. Sister Candace said so when I was fixing mine. But she said mine was—she said nicer things about it than *you* ever did, Roger. Why, how absent-minded you *are*! What were you thinking about then—just that very minute?"

"I? I wasn't saying anything!"

"Of course you were not! And I don't believe you were thinking anything either, if the truth was known. What was it you and Elder Lindsley were talking about there at the gate? You said, 'If I see the truth——' I guess the Sisters thought you were going to prophesy!"

"Oh!" Roger came to himself in an outcry which seemed partly a recognition of the fact, and partly a burst of perplexity. He tried several times to find the next word, but the reins slipped from his hands, and he groped, as if in the dark, for them on the floor of the chaise before he spoke again. "It was something we had been talking about. Why did it seem so strange to you that the Sisters should want us to join them?" He looked at her now steadily, but with the vagueness that was always in his eyes. "Did you think they hadn't a right to do it?"

"Of course they had a right to do it!

If they believe they're leading the angelic life, it's only common charity for them to want other folks to lead it too."

He winced a little, as if at a lurking mockery at her answer, but he asked: "And should you blame Elder Lindsley if he had tried to persuade me, as the Sisters tried to persuade you?"

She hesitated a moment. "I don't know as I should." She added gaily: "But I wish I could have heard what he said, and what you said back."

"And what should you think," he returned austerely, "if I told you that I said nothing back?"

"I don't understand you, Roger," she answered, with a tender anxiety, and she tried to steal her hand into that hand of his which lay on his knee next to her. But his hand was gathered into a fist, and she failed, and withdrew herself into her corner of the chaise. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," he burst out, "that there is no answer to make to them; that their doctrine is right, and their life is right." He seemed to wish to go on, but the impulse that had carried him so far failed him.

She was too Puritan in race to let him shrink from the logic of his words. "Then

you would like to be a Shaker yourself?" she said gravely; and she looked steadily at him from as great a distance as she could make between them in the chaise.

He held his face doggedly away. "Didn't you tell the Sisters pretty much the same thing?"

"That isn't the question," she answered more gently. "I told them I saw nothing to blame in their way of life."

"A thing cannot be blameless and yet be an error," he interrupted. "They are right, or they are wrong."

That was logic, too; and she could not gainsay him. In her silence he went on: "Nothing that Elder Lindsley said convinced me; he tried to hold me back. But I saw the truth for myself in the light of the gospel, that shined round about me suddenly, as it shone round Paul. Those people have found peace—and all the rest of the world is at war. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' It *must* be that they are right! They live as brothers and sisters—as angels. Yes, it is the angelic life!"

She only repeated, "Then you would like to be a Shaker yourself?"

He did not answer her directly. "I can

remember my own father and mother, even. They thought all the world of each other, but they were always disputing and quarrelling; and look around at all the married people? Every house is a scene of contention. Will against will always! Your grandfather and grandmother, who have lived together for fifty years, do they agree? But the Shakers have peace; the kingdom of heaven has come to them on earth."

"Then you would like to be a Shaker, too," she repeated again, but less harshly than before.

"I can be nothing without you, Chloe! We should not care less for each other, but —differently. Let us both—I have had this day a vision of the truth, and now I see that all we have thought, all we have hoped, from our—our—love, is a mistake, a snare, a delusion! But there is another love! There are Brothers and Sisters there who were once husbands and wives. I feel bound as much as they were. But we could join the Shakers, and be as free as they are—as the angels are—— I have hurt your feelings!"

"Ah," cried the girl, "you don't know what you've done! It isn't my feelings you've hurt!" And perhaps in these words she meant to express what was otherwise

unsayable; the wound to something deeper than feeling, to her womanhood itself, to what was most sacred and most helpless in it. "Do you expect me to argue with you, Roger? To tell you that I wish to be your wife, if you don't wish to be my husband?"

"No, no! Surely not that! I only wish you to see this step as I do, and to take it with me."

She slowly shook her head, and he added—

"For I can never take it without you!"

"Yes, you can, Roger!" she returned. "And you will, if you are convinced. But are you really, really in earnest? No, you needn't tell me!" She was silent, and then she said desolately, "Well, I won't stand in your way! I knew I wasn't equal to you——"

"Chloe!"

"And I always thought something would happen. Oh, I guess I'm punished enough for going to the Shakers with you!"

"It was providential—it was ordered, Chloe. Come back with me, and let us talk it over with them; and then, if you can't see it as I do——"

"You'll give it up, and come away with me? No, thank you, Roger! I won't be a

stumbling-block to you, and I would sooner die than—— I don't blame you; and I *want* you should go back to the Shakers. Yes, I do! Right now!" She laid her hands upon the reins, and the old horse was only too willing to stop.

"Chloe, I will never go without you!"

"You will never go *with* me. And now, if you have a grain of pity in you, you'll get out, and let me go home alone. I can find the way, if you're not here to blind me. My head's all in a whirl—I can't take it in! I thought we had the highest claim to each other; and that there was something—something we oughtn't to give up, even for the sake of getting to heaven. *I* wouldn't have done it. But I don't blame you, Roger, if you don't see it so. I can't go to the Shakers with you, but you can go, and I will let you, freely; and if it is on your conscience, I will never have one hard thought of you—and I *wish* you to go.—Oh!" She broke into a passion of grief, which was partly that of astonishment, for he rose, as if to obey her, and get down from the chaise.

"Roger, Roger! are you really going to leave me?"

"You said to do it."

"But what shall I do?" she pleaded

piteously. "What shall I say to them at grandfather's?"

"I will stay and take you home; and I will tell them myself. There is no haste. I will go home with you—to your grandfather's—your father's. We can go back to Birchfield, and I will tell your father—I will explain to him."

He had sat down again and taken the reins. She caught them fiercely from him. "Do you think I will let you appear so before them? No! *I* will tell them; *I* will explain! And I will go down on my knees to them in shame. Yes, they were right about you, Roger Burton, and I was the simpleton—to believe in you, to trust you. Oh, I am punished! Are you staying here because you think I will change? If you stay, I will get out myself, and *walk* to grandfather's."

"I will not make you walk, but I will follow you"—and now he really dismounted.

"Don't you dare!" she cried. "Oh, I forgive you, Roger! You don't know how *much* I forgive you. You can never know."

She began to moan and to cry; she pulled weakly at the reins, and the old horse started on.

Roger stood in the road and watched the *chaise* out of sight.

X.

THE Brethren and the Sisters were gathering in the church building for the Sunday morning service. They came from the West Family and the East Family, in little groups of the different sexes, moving silently along the grassy borders of the sandy village street, and they silently issued by ones and twos from the doors of the plain, large buildings of the Church Family, and entered the plain, small church-house, the Sisters in their straight drab gowns and stiff, wire-framed gauze caps, which hid their hair, and the Brothers in their severe suits of grey or brown, their formless trousers and buttonless coats of Quaker cut, and their straggling locks falling to their necks under their wide-brimmed hats without ribbons. They had set, serious faces, and the little children who paced gravely along beside them—the boys with the men, and the girls with the women—had faces set and serious as their elders. It was all so still, in the

glisten of the morning sun, with those figures tending noiselessly towards one point, that it was like a vision, and they were like spirits.

Within the church-house they took their places in rows, fronting one another—the men on one side and the women on the other; the children were divided, the boys from the girls; and as the neighbour-folk began to come in from the outside, they were assorted in like manner. Among the strangers there were some fashionably dressed people from a summer resort not far away; they had come in carriages, which they had left standing in the care of their coachmen along the street; but they had left the rule of their world there, too, and conformed to the Shaker custom in the Shaker church.

It was some time after the last comer was seated before the Brothers or Sisters made any sign of life. Then one of the Sisters began to sing, and presently they all joined her, the men as well as the women, and softly beat time to their singing on the broad napkins stretched across their knees. When the singing was over, one and another spoke briefly upon any serious thing he or she had in mind. Presently, they all rose and put back their seats against the wall,

and, in the space left free, they formed themselves into two irregular circles, and began a brisk march, while they kept time to their chant with a certain joyous gesticulation. The air had a musical law of its own, with strange and abrupt changes of time, and it ceased with a close as sudden as any of the changes; the dance dissolved; the Brothers went back to their seats against one wall, and the Sisters to theirs against the other.

The Shakers of all ages shared in this rhythmical march. One weighty Sister, indeed, seemed to be excused from it; she sat still, and kept time with her hands to the tune which her feet might not follow with her vast bulk. But she was alone in her exemption; the youngest of the little wards of the family obeyed the music with the same joy and the same tottering step as the tall old man who led the rest in the mystic round. He stooped a little, but his downward face had the beauty of feature which age refines rather than wastes, and the perfect silver of his hair falling to his throat gave his face a patriarchal dignity. His hands wavered like his feet; he did not always reach the close of a bar with the rest of the singers; a rapture, which was like a

remembered rapture, appeared through the fatigue which his countenance expressed.

When the Brethren and Sisters were again still in their places, an elderly Brother came forward and delivered a brief homily, mainly directed against the natural propensities in all kinds, but bearing somewhat more severely upon the tea-habit among women, and admonishing all his hearers of the evil consequences of so much hot, unleavened bread as he assumed they were in the custom of eating.

He sat down, and another elderly Brother rose and said: "The meeting is dismissed."

XI.

THE strangers from the world-outside quickly dispersed, until none remained except a young girl and an old lady of those who had driven over from the summer resort, and who lingered until most of the Brothers and Sisters had gone, too. Certain of the younger and stronger Shakeresses had stayed to help out that weighty Sister who had not joined in the dance, and there was a kindly-looking Brother who was waiting for them to get her away before he shut the windows and closed the door. When he came back into the church-house, after giving a hand with the Sister down the steps, he found the old lady and the young girl, who was fretting, with a very young girl's fear of indecorum: "What *can* you want to say to him, grandmamma? *Do* come on!"

The old lady, who was something like a young girl, too, in a ghostly fashion, and had that grace of figure and carriage which often outlasts youth, would not be bidden. She

moved up to the Brother and asked: "Was that very old man who led in the marching Roger Burton?"

"Yee. Father Burton we call him. He always leads," said the Brother, with the pride and pleasure humanity feels in the power of any of the race to hold out against time. "On towards ninety now, too!"

"I should like to speak with him," said the old lady, and at this the young girl seemed arrested in another protest by pure astonishment. "I must!"

"Oh nay," returned the Shaker, with a smile of compassion for the absurdity. "He 's too old for *that*!"

"I must!" the old lady repeated; and she urged, as if it were a reason: "I used to know him before he joined the Shakers. I have got to see him!"

The Shaker Brother faltered, with his hand on the door, which he could not close because she gave no sign of moving from the doorway either for his purpose or for the impatience of the young lady, who now stood at the foot of the steps outside, prodding the turf with the point of her parasol. He looked out of the doorway, and, to his apparent great relief, he caught sight of the elder who had preached at the meeting. He

was going by the church-house, and he stopped a little at sight of the group by the doorway.

"Alfred," the Brother called to him, "here is a friend says that she has got to see Father Burton!"

XII.

THE elder drew near and looked first at the young lady, who rejected the inquiry of his glance, and then at the old lady, who said eagerly: "I used to know him when I was a girl, before he joined the Shakers, and I live a great ways from here now—I live in St. Louis. I guess if I 'm not too old, Roger isn't; and I don't believe but what he 'll know me." She smiled brightly, the elder may have felt her apparitional charm.

"I don't know what to say, exactly. It 's not our custom to refuse speech with friends from the world-outside. But Father Burton is very old. I question if he 'll know you."

"I guess he 'll know me," said the old lady.

"As long as you 've come such a great way, I don't see as we should do right—— There! It won't do him any hurt, I guess. You can go into the office, and I 'll bring him to you, if he isn't too tired." He

pointed towards a building a little way down the street. "That's the——"

"Oh, I guess I know where the office is well enough," chirped the old lady, and she gave a little laugh of triumph.

She sat alone in the office parlour, when the elder came in with Father Burton; her granddaughter, as if anything were better than staying through the reminiscences of the old people when they should come together, said she would go and sit in the carriage until her grandmother was ready. An office Sister, somewhat excited by the prospect of Father Burton's coming interview with this old lady who had insisted upon seeing him, remained with her.

"He don't seem very well," said Elder Alfred, when he came in with the old man; "but his hearing is about as good as ever it was, and I don't believe you 'll have to talk any too loud to him. His mind comes and goes a little, and you have got to look out for that."

He advanced these cautions, and then, as if he had no further concern in the matter, he left his charge, in the care of the office Sister, to the old lady.

XIII.

SHE had ignored his going. She seized one of Father Burton's trembling hands in hers before he could drop into the easy-chair the Sister pulled up for him.

"Roger Burton!" she cried out, "don't you know me?"

"Nay," said the old man.

"Why, I 'm Chloe—Chloe Mason, that *was*!"

"Yee," said the old man, with the effect of yielding so much, at least, and he looked at the Sister for further light on the point. He sank into the chair behind him, and the old lady drew hers up beside him, still keeping his hand and talking to him.

"I wanted to see you again, Roger, before we both passed away. I didn't believe you were living yet; but I happened to get hold of a paper that had a letter in it about a visit to the Family here, and it spoke of you; and nothing would do but I must start right on. I guess they thought I was

crazy, but they had to let me come. They were coming to the seaside anyway, and I just made them stop off at Egerton over Sunday, and let me come here and see you once more before you died, Roger." She gave a laugh and smoothed his hand between hers.

Father Burton had been working his toothless jaws together nervously, as old men do. Now he leaned forward, and, with a frown of his thick, senile brows, he said: "Chloe Mason that used to live at Birchfield when I taught the academy there?"

"Yes!" crowed the old lady. "I knew you would remember me! I saw it was you the minute I set eyes on you in the march. You a'n't changed a bit, hardly; you 've aged some; we all have; and I can see your teeth are gone a good deal, they 've got to go; but your nose is just the same, and your eyes, and your hair; it's whiter, of course, but it was always so light-coloured. You 've got beautiful hair, Roger!"

"Let me see," said the old man. "She was the one that married Ira Dickerman, wa'n't she?" He bent his frown upon her again, and began to work his lips while he waited her answer.

"I don't hardly believe he knows what

you are talkin' about," said the Sister softly.

"Yes, he does," rejoined the old lady, with the sharpness of one who will not suffer a friend to be criticised. "He knows it as well as I do. Don't you know it's Chloe talking to you, Roger?"

"Oh yee," he returned in a tone of dry unconcern.

"There, I told you he did," said the old lady. She turned again to the old man. "Yes, I married Ira about a year afterwards. He made me a good husband, Ira did; I'll never say anything against Ira. He was a master provider, and he looked out for everything. He was pretty forehanded before we left Birchfield in '33, and out west everything seemed to turn into money. He gave up the law, well, I suppose, as much as thirty years before he died, and didn't do anything but look after his property; he lent money some. He died in '56; it's a good while ago, but he outlived all our boys; there was five of them; and the two girls were married and had families of their own by that time. I've got one of my granddaughters here with me." She looked round for the girl, and then went on: "I guess she's gone out somewhere; she'll

be back again. I want you to see her. She's Ira all over; more than any of his own children were; they took after me mostly. He always said he was glad of that. He was very good to me, Ira was; and I didn't have anything to complain of. None of my children ever made me shed a tear as long as they lived. But, oh dear me! Life a'n't what we used to think it was, Roger, when we were young. It was all bright enough for me till we came here that day together. But, there! I haven't ever blamed you, and I wouldn't let *them*—no, not the first syllable! Grandfather was pretty mad that afternoon, when I came home alone. 'Why, is the fellow crazy?' said he. 'Don't you say a word against Roger, grandfather,' said I, and then I fell right out of the chaise. Well, I got over it—we get over almost everything in *this* world—and I went back home as soon as I was able; and then, after a while, Ira began to come round. First it did seem as if I couldn't bear to look at him; and if it hadn't been for my pride——"

The old man paused from chewing upon nothing, and turned his dim eyes upon her again: "Do I understand that *you* are Chloe Mason that was—Squire Pullen's daughter?"

"Granddaughter," the old lady corrected him. "There," she said to the Sister, "I told you! Yes, I'm Chloe, Roger; and I haven't ever had one hard feeling against you. You did it because you felt that it was right, and you always were a great hand to do what you thought was right. I tried to express it at the time, but I don't know as I did. I presume you couldn't understand how I felt, although I didn't pass any judgment on you. My! oh my! How it all comes back to me! I was right here, in this very place, with Candace and the other office Sisters—I guess they can't any of them be living now—and you came in after you'd been with Elder Lindsley, and you looked so strange I wanted to laugh; I thought you were scared because you'd stayed so long. But I guess I didn't want to laugh after we got started on the way home, and you began to tell me how you felt, and asked me to join the Shakers with you. First I thought you must be joking, and then I thought you must have taken leave of your senses; and when I found out you meant it, I didn't know what *to* think. It hurt me, Roger, more than a man could ever understand. It made me feel as if I was draggin' you down, and if I

couldn't see it as you did, I was kind of—well—low-minded; I don't express it very well *now*, and I couldn't begin to express it *then*. But it made it seem as if everything that we had thought so beautiful and lovely was disgraceful, somehow. And all the while I knew, just as well as I know now, that it *wa'n't*; but I didn't know how to say so; and I felt as if you were putting the whole burden on me, and I couldn't bear it. When I saw that you really meant it, all I wanted was to get you out of my sight. I didn't blame you, and I didn't hate you; I don't know as I can explain it, but it seemed as if I should go crazy the next minute if you stayed with me and tried to talk with me, and I couldn't tell you how I felt—and I *couldn't*. That was what made me make you get out of the chaise right off. I used to turn over what you did, and *turn* it over, and try to think whether I had done right or not; and whether I couldn't have made you see it as I did, if I'd tried. But you know I *couldn't* try, don't you, Roger? You know how it is when we've lost friends—how you go back to this point and that, and try to patch up some way they would have lived, if you had done so-and-so? Well, it was just like that! But, afterwards, I was

glad I hadn't tried to persuade you, or even let you go home to grandfather's and talk it over with him. It wouldn't have been any use, and I was spared *that* much, anyway."

The old man did not answer anything, and the Sister murmured: "I guess you 'll have to speak a little louder to him."

He roused himself and turned towards the old lady. "Did you come from Squire Pullen's now?" he asked.

She laughed. "Grandfather's? Why, he's been dead fifty years! That's like you, Roger! Just so absent-minded! *Have* you kept on here in the Family, living in a kind of waking dream as you used to?"

"I guess so," said the old man, with an air of fatigue.

"I guess he's beginning to get tired," the Sister hinted.

The old lady did not heed her. "Well, life's a dream, whether you take it sleeping or waking, it don't matter much which way you take it; and I guess you got as much good out of it your way as any. I've had dreams by night that are a good deal more like real things to me than the things that really happened. Don't it seem like a dream to you, our ever coming here together?"

"Yee," said the old man indifferently.

"But you remember it, don't you, Roger?" she entreated.

"Yee. I came here with a young woman I was engaged to be married to."

"Well, I was the one! Don't you know me? I'm Chloe!"

"Why, so you are! Why, you're Chloe! Yee, yee, I know you now. But first off——"

"Yes; I don't wonder. It's more than sixty years ago. I'll be eighty next August, and I was eighteen then."

"And what did you say we came here for?" He sank his voice to a confidential whisper.

"Just to see the place! And you liked it so much you wanted to stay, and I—let you. You remember about that?" The old man shook his head. "Yes, you do! You remember me? Chloe?" He shook his head again. She gave a little cry of grief and reproach. "You did, a minute ago!"

"I guess he's getting pretty tired," said the Sister more boldly.

"Tired?" the word seemed to vex him. "If you Sisters would leave my bed the way I fix it myself, and not meddle with it afterwards, I shouldn't get so tired fixing it over again, and I should be much obliged to

done what you thought was right, and you've had your reward. Do you think I'd better have stayed with you that day?"

The question, the caressing touch, apparently brightened him into consciousness of her again. He laughed, as if it all affected him humorously. "Yee, I've lived the angelic life, as you say, and it's been all I ever expected. I've had peace, I don't deny that, and I haven't had any sorrow or trouble; and still, I'm not sure but I'd have done about as well to go with *you*, Chloe."

He lifted his countenance upon her for a moment of full recognition. In the next he lost her. His face darkened, and he asked: "Do you know any of the Sisters in the Family house over there?"

"I used to know them," the old lady returned tremulously, "when I was a little girl."

"Well," said the old man, and he got stiffly to his feet, "I want you to tell them that if they smooth out that hollow in my bed——"

XIV.

THE young girl showed her impatient face at the doorway, and asked: "Isn't it almost time for us to be going, grandmother?"

"Yes, it 's time," said the old lady. "I guess Roger and I have about got through."

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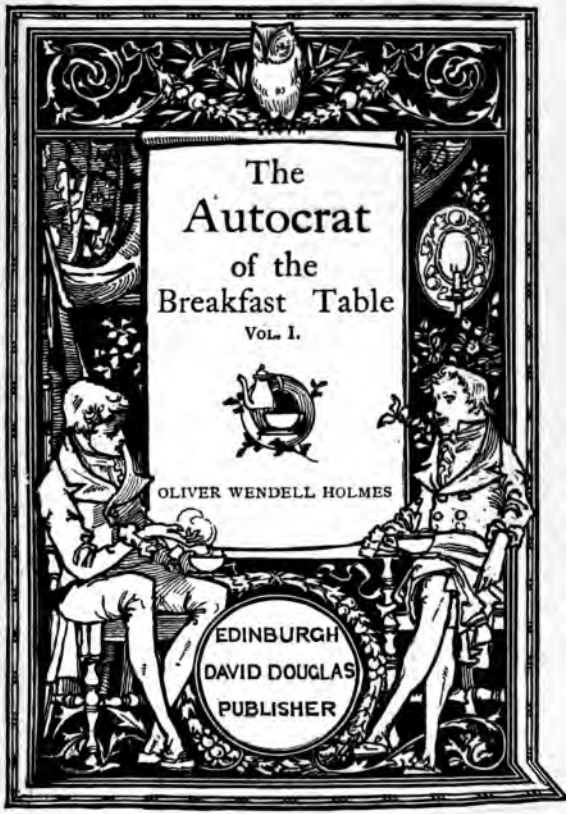
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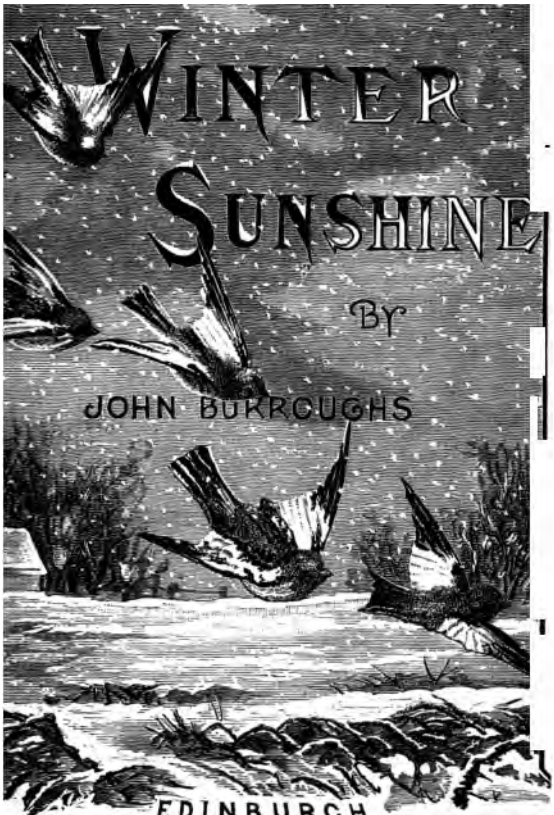

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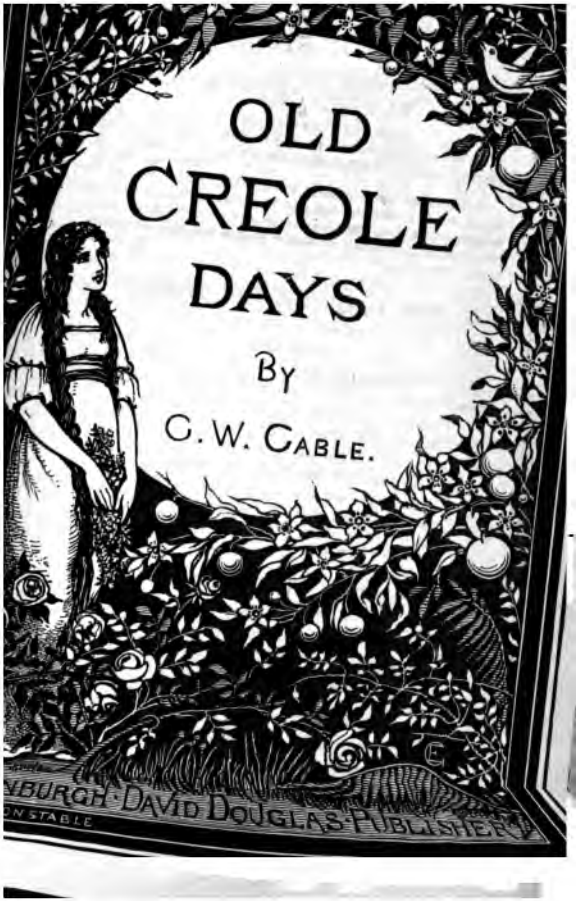
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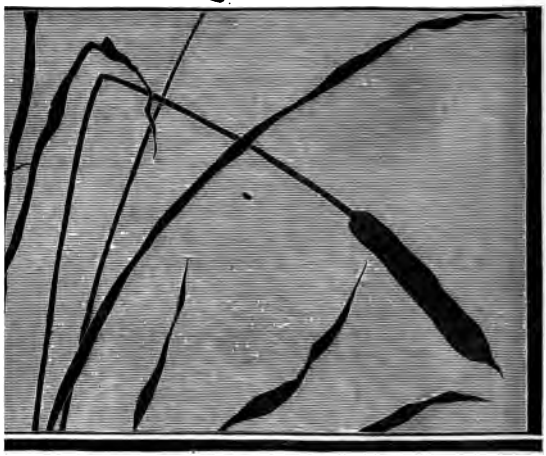

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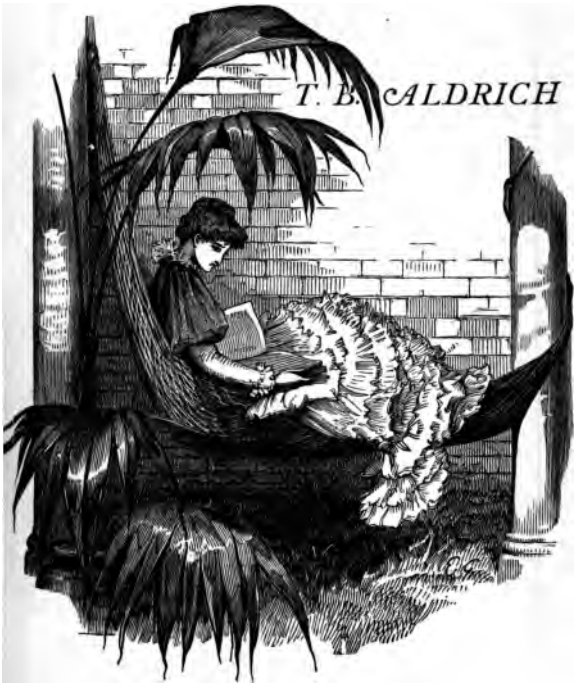

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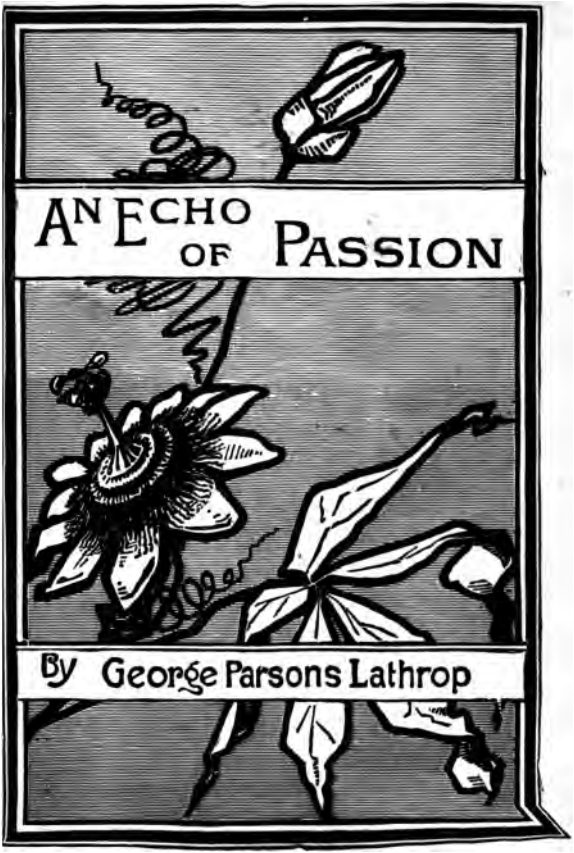
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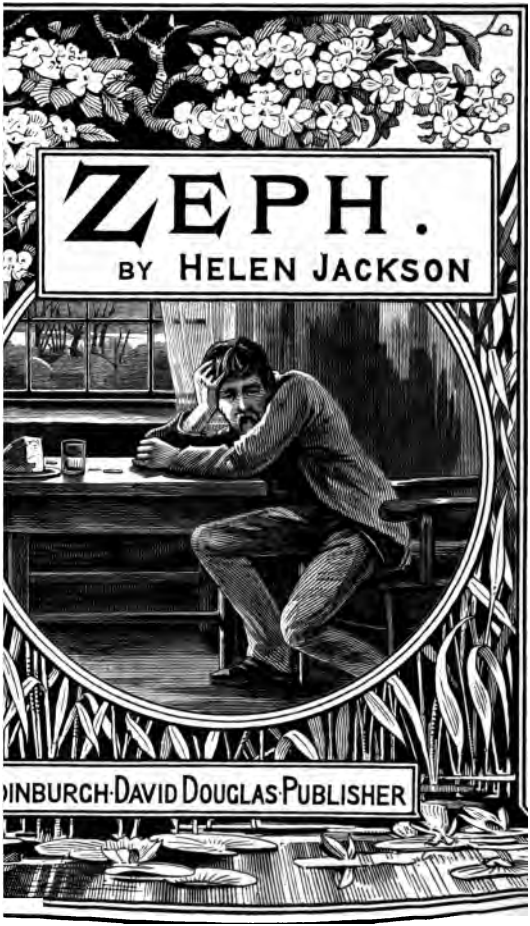
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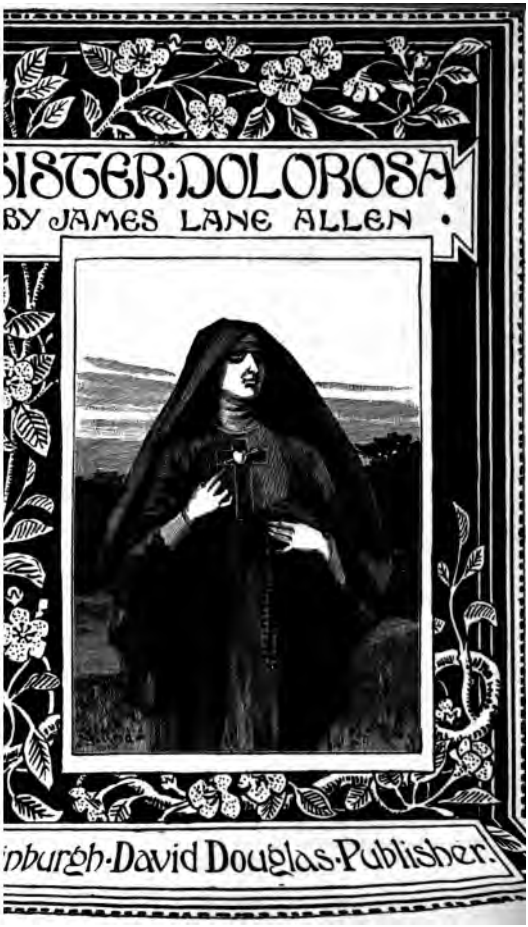
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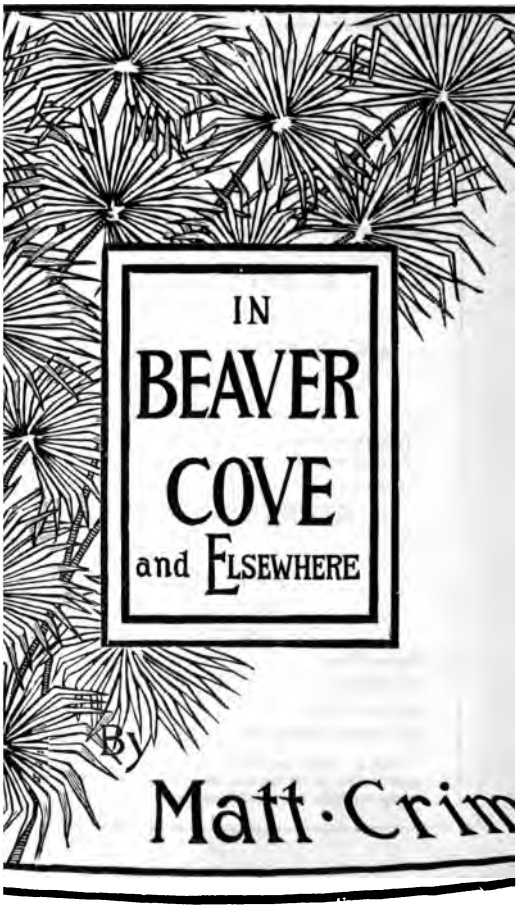
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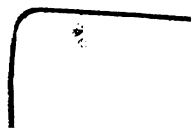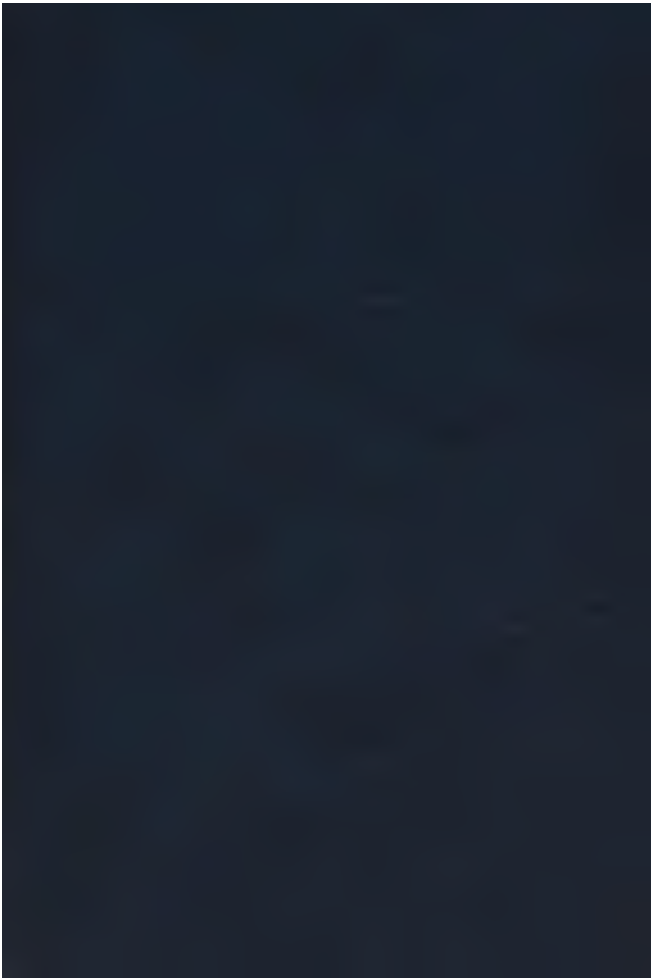
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